

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning
The Inventions of Men
IN THE
WORSHIP
OF
GOD.

By the Right Reverend
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LORD BISHOP of *London-Derry*.

The Third Edition.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *William Keblewhite*, at the Swan
in *St. Paul's-Church-Yard*, 1696.

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A
DISCOURSE

Concerning .

The Inventions of Men

IN

The Worship of GOD.

The INTRODUCTION.

OUR Blessed Saviour has taught us, That there are some Ways of Worshipping God, which have so great a Mixture of *Humane Invention* in them, that they are *Vain* and *Unacceptable* to Him, *Mark vii. 7. In vain* (saith He) *do they Worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* This obligeth every Man who has a concern for his Soul, to examine carefully the Worship he offers to God, whether it be such as God has instituted; lest his Service should be re-
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jected

jected with that Censure in the Prophet, *Who has required this at your hands?* But more especially it concerns the Pastors of the Church, who have the Direction of the Publick Worship of God, to be careful in Examining this Matter, that they may be able to satisfie their own Consciences, as well as the People's committed to their Charge, concerning the Purity of the Worship which they practise Themselves, and recommend to others.

II. It has pleased God, in his Providence, to make Me an Overseer over some part of his Flock in this Kingdom; and I look upon it to be my Duty, to use my Endeavours to Instruct Those that are committed to my Charge, in the Worship of God, according to the Rules he has prescribed; and to Warn such as I conceive to swerve from them, of their Mistakes. I hope it will be of Use and Satisfaction to Those that joyn with Me in the Publick Worship of God, to find, on Examination, That what they there practise, is agreeable to God's Institution. And as to those that think otherwise, I perswade myself, that an Admonition in the Spirit of Meekness can give them no just Offence, but rather be of Use to them also, by obliging them to Examine and Revise their Ways, that they may correct their Judgments,

if,

if, from what I offer, they shall see Reason for it.

III. In order to help those concerned to make a true and impartial Judgment in these Matters, I desire them to consider.

1st, *That it belongs only to God, to give Rules how He will be Worshipped.* This, I suppose, will be granted by all, since it seems to be a Truth naturally implanted in the Minds of Men, and universally acknowledged in all Times.

2^{dly}, I take it for a Truth agreed to by the generality of Protestants, *That the Holy Scriptures contain the Revelations of God's Will, concerning his Worship.*

3^{dly}, From these Two, we may reasonably infer, That it concerns us to keep as close as we can to those Directions which God has been pleas'd to afford us in his Word, without Adding to, Ommitting, or Altering any thing that He has there laid down. For, since God has vouchsafed us a certain Direction for his Worship in the Holy Scriptures, it is to be suposed, that all Ways of Worship are displeasing to Him, that are not expresly contained or warranted by Examples of Holy Men mentioned therein.

4^{thly}, We must observe, That the Worship of God is either Inward or Outward. The Inward Worship of God, consists in the

Inward Homage and Subjection of our Minds to him. The Outward, consists of such Acts and Duties as serve to express this Inward Subjection of our Souls; or that promote, encrease, or contribute towards it. Thus, for Instance, Vocal Prayer is a Part of Outward Worship; because it expresses the Inward Dependance of our Souls on God. Thus, Reading the Word of God, is a Part of the same; because therein we acknowledge our Subjection to Him, and to his Laws, and use it as a Means to Promote and encrease this Subjection. Thus, Celebration of the Sacraments, is a Part of the same Worship; because in them we not only express our Dependance on God for his Grace, but likewise oblige and bind our selves to serve Him. And the same holds in all Outward Acts of Worship.

5thly, We must remember, That 'tis in these Outward Acts that we are more immediately concerned as Publick Worshippers; for we cannot know the Inward Worship which Men pay to God in their Minds, but as it appears to us by these Outward Acts; And generally, when we speak of the Publick Worship of God, we mean this Outward; and concerning it, are the great Disputes and Differences among us; all of us being agreed as to the Inward, and of what sort that ought to be. IV. Ha-

IV. Having premised these few things, which, I hope, will be granted by all; I shall proceed directly to my proposed undertaking; and shall, with the greatest Fairness and Impartiality I can, Examine and Compare the Worship of God, which is directed and warranted by Scripture, as well with that which is prescrib'd and practis'd by our Church, as with that which is practis'd by such as differ from us.

V. Now, if we consider the Ordinary Service of God, as prescrib'd and practis'd in Scripture, we shall find the Main Substantial Parts of it to be these Five: *Viz.*

Praises,

Prayers,

Hearing,

Bodily Worship : And,

Celebration of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Method I shall take in Discourfing of each of these, shall be,

First, To shew what the Holy Scriptures direct concerning them particularly.

Secondly, I shall consider the Practice of our Church, with relation to those Directions and Examples. And,

Thirdly, The Practice of Protestant Dissenters.

CHAP. I. OF PRAISES.

SECT. I.

*What the Holy Scriptures prescribe
• concerning them.*

I. First then, as to the *Praises* of God. The Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments require the Use of the *Psalms*; in offering up Praises to God. We find in the Old Testament, 2 Chron. 29. 30. *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded The Levites to sing Praises to the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph; and they sang with gladness.* This Command of *Hezekiah* proceeded from God, and was approved by him. The same way of Praising God continued in the Jewish Church till our Saviour's time: And after that, we have yet a more positive Command for the Use of them by the Apostle, Ephes. 5. 19. *Speaking to your selves in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.* And Col. 3. 16. *Let the words of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs; singing, and making melody,*

lody, with grace in your hearts, to the Lord: I think there is no room to doubt, but by the Psalms, &c. in these places, is meant the Book of Psalms, which the Holy Ghost has left for this purpose to the Church.

II. Though the Scriptures recommend to us *Singing* of Psalms, yet in some Cases they *allow* us to *Say* them. I will not insist on those places of Scripture that seem to require us to do so, such as *Psal. 118. 2. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever: let the House of Aaron now say, and let them that fear the Lord now say, &c.*) because these Expressions being Poetical, may be so interpreted, as to mean *Singing*; though there is no Necessity of restraining the general Command of *Saying* or *Speaking* the Praises of God to *Singing* only. We find in Scripture several sacred Hymns; particularly of *Hannah*, the Blessed Virgin, *Zacharias*, and *Simeon*, and the Saints in Heaven, *Revel. 7. 12, & 11. 17.* which are said to have been *Said* by them respectively; and the Circumstances in the Story do not make it probable that they were sung. From all which we may reasonably infer, That where People can sing, they are obliged to do it, in Obedience to God's Command: But where, through any Defect of Nature or Art, they cannot *Sing* Decently, they may be dispensed with *Saying*.

ing. Only People ought not by this Indulgence to be encouraged to neglect Singing altogether; or to think that God doth not require it of them, when by a little Pains or Industry they may attain to the Art of decently performing it in his Service.

III. 'Tis certain, the Word of God recommendeth to us Psalms and Hymns in *Prose*, for our Praising God. If we look into the Songs of the Blessed Virgin, of *Zacharias*, or *Simeon*, we shall find them all in *Prose*; and such are the Songs of the *Blessed*, which they are represented Singing, in the *Revelations*, particularly *Chap. 5. 9. & 15. 3.* As to the Hebrew Psalms, 'tis evident, that they are Poetical; but the Poetry of them consists rather in the Style and manner of Expression, than in any certain Measures or Verses; which those that have searched most narrowly into them, have yet been able to discover, so as to satisfy an indifferent Reader. But whatever Poetry there may be in them, we cannot find, by any of the ancient Translations which were made use of by the Church, in our Saviour's, or his Apostles time, or in the Ages immediately following, that they or the first Christians did sing any thing in *Verse*; but we are sure that they sung Hymns in *Prose*: So that we have no certain Scriptural Warrant for the Use

Se&1. How warranted by Scripture. 9

Use of Verse or Metrein the Praises of God.

Perhaps some may fanſie that Verſe or Meaſure was not in uſe in thoſe Countries, and that therefore they ſung their Songs in Proſe; but this is a Miſtake; Poetry and Verſes were then in thoſe places where the Pſalms were tranſlated, in great requeſt; and at the higheſt perfection, when the New Teſtament was penned, and yet we have no Example therein of their Uſe in the Praises of God.

And it is very manifeſt that this proceeded from Choice not Neceſſity: For if the Holy Ghoſt had thought Verſe neceſſary for Divine Pſalms, we may preſume he would have inſpired ſome of the Holy Men in Scripture, when Extraordinary Gifts were ſo common, either to Tranſlate the Pſalms of the Old Teſtament into Verſe, or elſe to Compoſe ſome of the other Hymns that are recorded in the New, after that way: But neither of theſe having been done, tis at leaſt a preſumption that we may praiſe God as acceptably in Proſe as in Verſe.

And there is one thing further to be conſidered, That the Prophets of the Heathen, who pretended to be inſpired, generally wrote their Prophecies and their Hymns to their Gods, in Verſe: We know not but this may be one Reaſon why the Holy Ghoſt
thought

thought fit that such as were inspired by Him should decline that way of Recording their Prophecies or Praises.

IV. As the Scriptures prescribe us the Use of Psalms in the Praises of God, so they encourage us to offer those Praises by way of Responses, or Answering: For this, we have the best Examples that can be desired, even the blessed Angels and glorified Saints: So *Isa. 6. 3.* *And one cried unto another, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts.* And the Church triumphant through the whole *Revelation* is (I think) constantly represented praising God after this manner. So *Chap. 7. 9.* where *The Multitude*, that represent the People cried out with a loud voice (*vers. 10.*) *Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.* And then, *The Angels and Elders*, who represent the Clergy, perform their Part, *vers. 12.* saying, *Amen; Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God.*

They are represented the same way answering one another, *Chap. 19. 1.* *I heard a great voice of much People in Heaven, saying Alleluja; this they repeat (vers. 3.) then the Twenty four Elders* (representing, as before, the Clergy) answer (*vers. 4.*) *Amen, Alleluja.* Then (*vers. 5.*) *a Voice came out of the Throne saying, Praise our God.* Upon which *vers.*

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6.) the People resume their part, and answer, *Alleluja: for the Lord Omnipotent Reigns.* I make no question but this is taken by Allusion from the manner of the Church's Praising God on Earth; and there is nothing in it but what is agreeable to St. Paul's Command of *Teaching and Admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs;* which supposes every one to have share in them, either by turns, or by bearing a part.

It is observable, that the Psalms contain many excellent Instructions and Exhortations, as well as Praises and Prayers, and therefore St. Paul recommends them to Christians for their mutual Instruction and Admonition. It was common therefore for one to sing, and the rest to hearken for their Instruction and Edification, as appears 1 Cor. 14. 31. *For ye may all prophesie one by one, that all may learn and be comforted: Prophesying here* (as we may find from the 26th. verse of this Chapter) includes *Psalms* as well as *Doctrines, Tongues, Revelations and Interpretations;* and the praising God *one by one*, or by turns, amounts to praising Him by way of Responses or Answering; and tho' these Prophets were inspired, yet it is plain they acted in this according to the settled Order of the Church, *Vers. 33. As in all the Churches of the Saints;* and these inspired Prophets thus praising

sing God *one by one*, is an unquestionable Precedent that God approves this way in his Praises.

This Way of praising God by Answering one another, is the most Ancient we find in Scripture. For thus *Miriam* praised God, *Exod. 15. 21.* And *Miriam* answered them, *Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath Triumphed gloriously, &c.* And the last Song recorded in Scripture is of the same sort, *Rev. 19.* as is before-mentioned.

I reckon the Songs with which the Women of *Israel* received *Saul*, *1 Sam. 18. 7.* to be Religious, and there it is expressly said That *they answered one another: And Chap. 21. 11. Did they not sing one to another? &c.* But whether these Songs were Religious or no, it is certain that the Frame and Composition of some Psalms are such, as plainly discover that they were designed to be sung in parts; and as much is owned by the best Commentators: Such are the 24, and 118. Psalms.

It is to be observed that the Law of *Moses* neither prescribes Psalms in the praises of God, nor Singers, nor the way of Singing: These all therefore are parts of Natural Religion, and indeed ancienter than the Law, as appears by *Exod. 15.* What therefore we find in the Old Testament concerning these, is
either

Sec^t. 1. How Warranted by Scripture. 13

either from the immediate Prescriptions and Revelations of God by his Prophets, or from the Dictates of Nature, and not any part of the Ceremonial Law. And 'tis obvious that Natural necessity will teach any considering Man this way of alternate singing or answering in parts; for if the Songs be long, as some of the Psalms are, no one Man's Voice can hold out to the end.

V. The Holy Scriptures recommend to us the use of Instruments in the praises of God; the Psalmist frequently uses and recommends them, and the whole Book of Psalms is concluded with this Advice, *Psal. 150. ver. 3. Praise him with Timbrel, praise him with stringed Instruments and Organs, &c.* Thus Religious Persons were taught to praise God before the Law. *Ex. 15. 20. And Miriam the Prophetess the sister of Aaron, took a Timbrel in her hand, and all the Women went after with the Timbrel, &c.* And thus the Blessed in Heaven are represented praising God. *Rev. 5. 8. and 14. 2.* The Writers of the New Testament recommend to us the *Psalms* which were the Hymns of the Jewish Church, and command us to sing them, and 'tis observable that the word we render *Sing*, *Jam. 5. 13.* originally implies *singing with an Instrument*. Now if they had not approved the Jewish way of singing them, which was with Instruments,

struments, they would not have used a word that imported it; nay it is not to be doubted but they would have cautioned us against it; but the use of Instruments (as I have shewed before in the case of *Miriam*) being no part of the Ceremonial Law, but antecedent to it, ought not to cease without some Command or Precept condemning it.

VI. Lastly, The Scripture requires that we understand the praises we sing to God; and this warrants our Translating them into the Vulgar Tongue; It is a duty therefore incumbent on the Governors of the Church, to procure the *Psalms* to be translated for the Use of the People under their Charge, and they may expect the assistance of God's Spirit when they attempt it, in Obedience to his Command. But if through Humane Frailty, any mistake, not contrary to Faith, should creep in, this ought to be no Exception against the Use of the translation, since there are such Mistakes both in the *Syriac*, *Greek* and *Latin* Translations, some of which are of great Antiquity, and were used by our Saviour himself, and his Apostles.

These are the directions the Scriptures give us for the Performance of this first part of the Worship of God, which consists in praises, and the manner we find them offer'd to him by his Saints.

SECT.

S E C T. II.

*The manner of Praising God Publickly,
which is prescribed and practised by our
Church.*

NOW as to the manner of offering *Praises* in our Church, it is to be considered,

I. That we are directed to praise, glorify, and confess to God every Day, in a certain number of *Psalms* of his own Appointment, out of the Old Testament; and then in such Hymns as are recorded in the New: And to these there are added such other Hymns, Confessions of Faith and Thanksgivings, as will appear by and by to be agreeable to the general Directions of Scripture.

But inasmuch as the Mystery of the Holy Trinity is more explicitly revealed to us under the Gospel, than it was to those under the Law; Therefore our Church has thought fit to require us with every *Psalm* and *Hymn* to intermix, *Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever shall be: To signify, that we believe, that the same God was worshiped by them as by us, the same God that is glorified,*

fied in the *Psalms*, having been from the beginning *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, as well as now: So that our ascribing this Glory expressly to the Three Persons in whose Name we are Baptized, ought not to be taxed as any real Addition to the *Psalms*, it being only used as a necessary Expedient to turn the *Jewish Psalms* into *Christian Hymns*, and to fit them for the Use of the Church now, as they were before for the Use of the Synagogue; which practise I presume can give cause of Exception to none but *Socinians*.

2. Our Church Orders these *Psalms* to be either *Sung* or *Said*, as the People are able to offer them; not being willing to lay a greater restraint on them than the Scripture has done: In which (as I have already shewed) we have Examples for both these ways of praising God.

3. They are proposed to us in Prose, without any other alteration from the Original than what was necessary to make them intelligible in our Language.

4. The People are allowed to bear their part in them, and either to sing or say them by way of Answering: This is according to the Scripture Examples, but it is not imposed, except in very few Cases.

5. Our Church permitteh the Use of some grave Muscal Instruments to regulate
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Sect. 2. How practised by our Church. 17

the Voices of those that sing, and to stir up their Affections, which are the Natural Effects of Musick, and seem more requisite in Northern Countreys, where generally People's Voices are more harsh and untuneable than in other places; but this is not imposed in any Congregation, nor doth any Rule of our Church require it, and therefore it is at the People's Choice, whether they will use the help of these Instruments or no.

6. This then is the care our Church has taken, for the publick performance of the praises of God, and if we bring grace in our hearts, and an inward sense of the Majesty of God, and of his Mercies towards us, when we come to joyn in them, which is our part and duty to do, who can say that God's praises thus celebrated, are not according to his Commands, and acceptable to him? I think it sufficiently plain, that they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, which ought to be our Rule for this, and all other parts of God's Worship.

I think no more necessary therefore on this Head, but with all earnestness, to beseech you who are of our Communion, to consider how great and important a part these praises are of the Worship of God, and to apply our selves with all diligence and holy zeal to the performance of it; for we
C
never

never come nearer the Imployment of the Blessed, than when our Hearts and Mouths are filled with the praises of our God.

S E C T. III.

The Dissenters manner of Praising God in Publick.

ANd now as to you my Friends and Brethren, who dissent from this Worship of ours, give me leave with all calmness to examine how you perform this great Work of Praising God; and I desire you to compare your own practice in your publick Assemblies, with what you find in your Bibles concerning this Duty.

I. Your Directory determines it to be *the duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of Psalms together in the Congregation, and that in singing Psalms the voice is to be tuneable and gravely ordered, and lastly, that it is convenient that the Minister, or some other fit Person appointed by him and the other ruling Officers, do read the Psalm, line by line, before the singing thereof; and your common practice is to sing two or three Verses of a Psalm in Meetre, the Minister, or Clerk, first reading each line, and the People singing it after.*

II. Before I proceed to make any Observations on these Rules and Practice, to prevent

Sect. 3. *How practised by Dissenters.* 19

prevent Mistakes, I desire you to observe,

1. That I do not condemn the singing of Psalms in Meetre as unlawful.

2. That I take it for granted, That the Apostles and Primitive Christians did praise God in Prose, and that Meetre and Rhyme are, for ought appears, purely of Humane Invention.

3. We must consider that if we take the Psalms (as *We* use them) in Prose, there is not a more exalted Piece of Poetry in the World, nor any thing better fitted to raise in serious and well-disposed People, the most devout Affections. Whereas, if we take them as they are commonly used in Rhyme, the Force, the Vigour, the Loftiness which are so Extraordinary in the Prose Translation, are almost entirely lost in the Verse, and tho' several have attempted to Translate them into English Verse, yet I cannot find that any one has done Justice to the Majesty of the Expressions, and hardly to the Sense of them.

III. Having premised these things, I intreat you to consider impartially with me, how far this your Practice agrees with the Scripture Rule.

1. Then the Scriptures command us to praise God in Psalms, and undoubtedly the first Christians used whole Psalms at a time.

Sometimes they joyned together in singing them, as our Saviour and his Disciples did *Matt. xxvi. 30.* Sometimes one only sung, and the rest attended for their edification, as appears from *1 Cor. xiv. 26.* But the aforesaid Method of singing the Meetre Psalms takes up so much time, that it is impossible to praise God in whole Psalms after that manner. But if we use the Psalms in Prose, according to the Order of our Church, the Experience of Good Men doth testifie that we may easily pass through them in a Month, with seriousness and attention, whether we sing or read them. And to well-disposed Minds no part of God's Service is more agreeable or edifying: whereas some Years would not serve to that purpose, if we should use the new-invented way of singing a few Verses. And I question whether all of them were ever yet sung through in one Meeting-place, perhaps not in all the Meetings of the Kingdom, and yet it must be confessed that every one of them was left to the Church by the Holy Ghost for that use, and is profitable, when thus used, for Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction and Comfort. Which plainly proves, that the singing the Psalms in Meetre, is not the Scripture Way of using them.

2. Let

Sect. 3. *How practised by Dissenters.* 21

2. Let me mind you, that in the time of the late Usurpation, Dr. *Manton*, a Man of considerable Reputation among the Dissenters, observes in his Comment on the Epistle of St. *James*, Chap. v. Vers. 13. That several scrupled singing Psalms at all; others objected against singing them in Verse; this he calleth a *vain Cavil*, yet proposeth, *if the scruple continueth, that such may sing the Reading Psalms, as hath been used in Cathedrals*, and vouches St. *Austin* and *Athanasius* for it; which is a plain Confession from this considerable Person, that this way of singing is less liable to Exception, than yours.

3. I know it is alledged, that we ought to have the Psalms in Verse for singing, as well as we ought to have them in Prose for Reading. But I have shewed already, that Christ and his Disciples sung their Hymns in Prose; and I desire you to consider whether it be necessary to vary from these Precedents. We have a Command to Translate them (which supposes into Prose, because the Original is so) but none to turn them into Meetre, which necessarily requires Paraphrasing, changing the Order of the Sentences, sometimes adding and leaving out Words; and on that account seems to give Humane Wit too great a Liberty of treating the Word of God as Men please: At least, we must acknowledge

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ledge that the Psalms so ordered, partake of Humane Frailty, and are hardly equal to the best meer Humane Composures. When therefore we use such Psalms, we ought to use them as Humane Composures only; and not as God's Word: And thus they are used by our People in our Assemblies, not as any main substantial part of the Worship of God, but rather as a voluntary entertainment of Devotion, and a refreshment to the People between the parts of the Service; much less are they allowed by us to juggle out the Psalms and Hymns appointed by God.

4. As to the manner of singing the Psalms in Meetre, at present in use, both with you and us in some Places, that is, the Minister or Clerk's reading a line, and the People singing it after, is a great interruption to the Musick, and to the understanding of the Psalm, by breaking the sense of it, and in that respect very inconvenient, and is likewise a late Invention of our own, never used by any Foreign Church, either Popish or Reformed, for ought I can find, to this day; and has been taken up to supply the negligence and laziness of People, who will not now, as formerly, be at pains to get Psalms by heart, or so much as procure Books, or learn to read them.

5. Notwithstanding your Directory requires

Sect. 3. *How practised by Dissenters.* 23

quires the voice in singing Psalms *to be tuneably and gravely ordered*, yet you have not only refused the Use of Instruments, (which are a natural means to help the Voice, and make it tuneable, and are used by most of the Reformed Churches in *Europe*,) but have also determined it to be Unlawful.

I would entreat you to consider, that though perhaps it may not be so proper to press the use of Instruments in the service of God, in these Parts, where so many, for want of being used to them, have entertained Prejudices against them, and some are incapable of being affected by them, yet the making them unlawful, is against Nature and Scripture, and is on that account a dangerous Superstition, and Encroachment on Christian Liberty.

6. The same Superstition and Encroachment it is, not only to forbear to praise God in singing or saying Psalms and Hymns by way of *Responses* or *Answering*, (of which I have given such Noble Precedents out of Scripture) but even to determine it to be Unlawful.

Lastly, I would entreat you to consider, That forasmuch as appears, you have altogether laid aside the Psalms in Prose, and the other Scripture Hymns, that are of God's *immediate Appointment*, and for the Use of

which we have the Example of our *Saviour* and his *Saints*, insomuch that they are nowhere used by you in the Praises of God ; but in their stead you have substituted, as is before observed, a few Verses of a Psalm of *Humane Composure*, without Scripture Example or Precedent, and sing them in a way that has nothing of ancient Practicè, much less Scripture, for it, but is purely and immediately an *Invention of Men*.

IV. The Case then between our Church and you, in this Point, I think impartially stands thus: Our Church praises God every Day with five or six Psalms, besides other Hymns, of *His Own Appointment*, and in *His Own Words and Method*, and yet is deserted and condemned by you in this very Point, as *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men* ; whereas you, who only praise Him in a piece of a Psalm of a few Verses, and in a *Method of your own finding out*, perswade your selves that you keep the Ordinances of God pure and unmixed from *Humane Invention*.

This is a thing seriously to be considered by you ; for as it is easie to think what all unprejudiced Men will judge of it now, so we may conclude what God will judge of it at the last Day. If you in earnest lay these things to heart, and reflect on them, I perswade
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my self that they will at least prevail with you to be modest in your Censures of us your Brethren ; and prevent your Judging, much less Condemning us, or our manner of Praising God, as Unacceptable to Him.

CHAP. II.

OF PRAYER.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning it.

LET us now proceed to the *Second* Main Part of the *Worship of God*, in the Publick Meetings of Christians ; which I observed was *Prayer, or Supplication*.

And if we consider what Rules, Directions and Examples the Scriptures afford us, for the Performance of this Duty, we shall find,

That they direct us to offer up our Prayers in a Set and Prepared Form of Words. That we may more clearly judge of this Matter, it will be fit to consider the several Parts of *Prayer* distinctly by themselves ; such as *Confession, Supplication, Intercession, &c.*

I. *Con-*

1. *Confession* of our own Unworthiness, and of God's Mercy, to aggravate it, is commonly looked on as the first Part of *Prayer*, and proper to introduce our *Supplications*. Now, in searching the Scriptures, we shall find exprefs Command to use a Set Form of Words in both these sorts of *Confession*. So *Deut.* 26. 3. *Thou shalt go unto the Priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord swore unto our fore-fathers to give us. And then the offerer was to make his Confession, ver. 5. And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, &c.* Here we have a *Form* of *Confession* of the Person's Unworthiness, and of God's Goodness and Mercy; together with a *Profession* of Obedience, and Dependance on Him, prescribed by God Himself in Set and Prepared Words.

The same appears from *Solomon's* prescribing a *Form* of *Confession* for the penitent *Israelites*, *1 Kings* 8. 47. Which Words we find accordingly applied in *Psal.* 106. 6. and made part of a larger *Form* of *Confession*, to be used in their Captivity, (as *Solomon* designed them;) which appears from the 4th. Verse of the same *Psalms*, (taken from the *Form* prescribed by *David*, *1 Chron.* 16. 35.) And *Daniel*, in his *Form* of *Confession*

SECT. 1. How Warranted by Scripture. 27

Confession in Captivity. *chap. 9. 5.* uses the same *Form* of Words. From whence it appears, that they were not left arbitrarily to Choice or Discretion, though other Words might be joyned with them, when there was Occasion to Enlarge or Vary the Form.

Many of the *Psalms* are Forms of *Confession*, and were used and daily repeated by the Jewish Church. *Psal. 51.* was the Form of *Confession* David prepar'd and us'd, for his Murther and Adultery: And he not only used it himself, but directed it to the Master of his Choire, to be used in the Publick Service, as appears from the Title of it, *Psal. 78.* is a general *Confession* for the whole People, setting forth at large the Mercies of God to them; and their Ingratitude, Disobedience and Rebellion: and this not as a Pattern, but as a Set and Prepar'd Form, to be used in their Publick Service. All which shew us, that Addresses to God in such Forms, are of Divine Institution; and are a Warrant to us, that he approves that our *Confession* should be made to him in that manner.

2. The Second Part of Prayer is *Supplication* for good Things: And in this Case we have likewise the Commandment of God for a Form of Words, *Deut. 26. 12, 15.* *Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy*

thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swearest unto our fathers, &c. So *Hos. 1. 2.* Take with you words, and turn to the Lord your God, and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, &c. Moses in the Wilderness used a Set Form of Words to this purpose, and recommended it to be used by the Church of God for ever; as is manifest from *Psal. 90.* which has this Title, *A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.* When such a Person by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, used, and left to be used by us in our *Supplications*, such a Set and Prepared Form of Words, we ought not to doubt but that manner of Address is acceptable to God.

3. The Third Part of Prayer, is *Intercession* in the behalf of others. Now, Blessing is an eminent sort of *Intercession*; and for the Use of a Set Form of Words in this, we have likewise the Command of God, *Numb. 6. 23.* *On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, the Lord bless thee, and keep thee, &c.* Here we have not only a Blessing, but an earnest *Intercession* with God for his People, and the Form and Words prescribed by Himself, which were not to be used by mean, ignorant People, (who are only now supposed, by some, to need the help of Forms,) but by Aaron, and his Sons, the Chief Priests. From which we may be assured,
That

Se&t. I. *How Warranted by Scripture.* 29

That God approves that manner of Address in our *Blessings* and *Intercessions* for one another, not only from *mean* People, but from the *greatest*.

4. The Fourth Part of Prayer consisteth in *Petitions* for averting Evil, commonly called *Deprecation*. And for this purpose, we have several Forms prescribed by God, *Joel. 1. 14. Gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land, into the house of the Lord your God, and say unto the Lord, Alas, for the day, the Day of the Lord is at hand, &c.* We have God's Commandment for another Form, *Joel. 2. 17. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the Altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, &c.* From whence it clearly follows, that God approves the Use of a Form in this Part of Prayers though commonly the most earnest and importunate, and such as seems least to admit of being bounded by a Form; so that we have the Approbation and Commandment of God for the Use of a Set Form of Words, in all the Parts of Prayer.

II. And accordingly we find holy Men of God, though full of Wisdom, and of his Spirit, using the same Set Form of Prayer always on the same Occasion. Thus the Scriptures inform us concerning *Moses*
Numbers

Numbers 10. 35. When the ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee, And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel. From whence it appears, that God approves the Use of one Set, Constant *Form* of Words in our Prayers, as long as the Occasion of repeating them is the same: For, I presume, none will suspect it was for want of Words, or of the *Spirit of Prayer*, that *Moses* confined himself to this *Form*.

I shall add further, that the whole Book of *Psalms* is a Collection of Prayers of all sorts; and there are few of them but what are most Excellent *Forms* of Prayer, expressed in such pathetick, significant and moving Words, that we have great reason to thank God for furnishing us with them, and which we can never hope to equal by any of our own Invention, such are the 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, &c. On this account they were used by the Jews, as the constant Service and Liturgy performed in their Temple, as we may gather from what I formerly quoted, 2 *Chron.* 29. 30.

III. But perhaps some may think these Commands and Examples of Set *Forms* of Prayer, not to be a sufficient Warrant to Christians; because they are taken out of the

Old

Sect. I. How Warranted by Scripture. 31

Old Testament, before the Spirit was poured out in so plentiful a measure, as under the Gospel. I shall therefore proceed to examine the Commands, and Examples of the New Testament. And here,

1. I think it is certain, that our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* Prayed by a *Form*; for they joined in the Worship of the Temple and Synagogues, which consisted in *Psalms*, as I have already shewn, and in some certain Forms of *Prayers* added to them, and constantly used in their daily Service, as we learn from those that give an Account of the Jewish Worship at that * time. Now our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* being frequently present at their Service, both in the Temple and Synagogues, 'tis manifest they approved the manner of Addressing themselves to God in a Set *Form* of *Words*.

* Much to this purpose might be urged out of the *Rabbins*; but the *Author* thinks it fit to confine himself to Scripture.

2. But our *Saviour* has put this Matter out of all dispute with Impartial Men, by prescribing a *Form* to his Disciples, when they desired him to teach them to pray as *John* taught his Disciples. For we find his way of Teaching them, was not by directing them to wait for the Impulses of the Spirit, and immediate *Inspiration* from God, of what they were

were to offer up to him: We do not find him saying, *When ye Pray; speak what shall then come into your Minds, or what shall be given you in that hour, without taking thought about what they should say*; as he did in another Case, that is, when they should be brought before Governours and Kings for his sake; *Mat. 10. 19.* But in addressing themselves to God, he prescribed them a *Form of Words*, and Commanded them to use it *Luke 11. 2.* And he said unto them, *When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* Here is an expresse Command of Christ to his Disciples, to use these *Words* when they Pray, *Our Father, &c.* A Command for the Use of a *Form*, so plain, that it is impossible to expresse it in clearer Terms.

'Tis not to be doubted but Religious Persons among the Jews offer'd up constantly Prayers to God. We see it in *David, Psal. 55. 17.* and in *Daniel, Chap. 6. 10.* And no doubt the Disciples of our Saviour were not wanting in this Duty, nor in Skill to perform it, since we find that other devout Persons of their time had their Hours of Prayer, as we see in *Acts 3. 1.* Therefore, what they desired of our Saviour, was not to teach them absolutely, or in general, to Pray, but to teach them to Pray, as *John also taught his Disciples*; that is, to give them a *Form*
of

SECT. I. *How Warranted by Scripture.* 33

of Prayer proper to his *Institution*, as they saw the Disciples of *Moses* and *John* had proper to theirs. Upon which our *Saviour* gave them the *Lord's-Prayer*, as a Summary of the main Points of his *Doctrine*, and as a constant Badge of their being his Disciples. As if he should have said, *Whenever you offer up to God your usual Prayers, which religious Custom has taught you, as Jews, and Disciples of Moses, or of John, whether in Secret or Publick; add this always to your other Prayers, for a continual Remembrance to you, of those Duties, Privileges, and Qualifications which belong to you, as My Disciples; and as a Means of obtaining Grace from your Heavenly Father, to enable you to persevere in them.* The *Lord's-Prayer* is therefore a Badge of Our Profession, imposed by Christ Himself, and to be used by Us, as we would be accounted His Disciples.

Neither will saying the Substance of it in other *Words* of our own *Invention*, answer the Intent of this Command: Since,

1. We are sure the Substance of the Prayer is put by Christ in the most apposite and comprehensive *Words* that are possible; and therefore wholly to lay them aside for others, is plainly to decline the Choice of Words that Christ has made for us, and substitute less apposite of our own, to express those Petitions in.

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2. The more particularly any thing is Commanded in the Worship of God, we ought to be the more careful to observe it; and may be the more confident, that God is pleased with our Performance of it. Since therefore we are particularly Commanded, when we Pray, to say, *Our Father, &c.* what ever other Prayers we offer to God, this ought not to be omitted.

3. In general, we are Commanded to offer up our Desires to God; and in particular, to offer this Prayer. These Commands agree very well together, and therefore the one ought not to juggle out the other. To lay aside the Prayer particularly Commanded by Christ, for others of our own composing in pursuance of the general Command, is too apparently to prefer our own *Invention* to God's *Command*.

4. When we take the liberty to word our own Prayers, we may forget some things; we may mix our own Frailties and Weakness in our Petitions; and this too often appears both in the Matter and Wording of them. The Way therefore to Supply these Defects, and to obtain Pardon for our Infirmities, is, to use our Lord's perfect Prayer, not only as a *Pattern* for Prayer, (*as some would have it,*) but likewise as a *Form* necessary to be used, to correct what may be amiss or defective in our own Prayers.

5. They

Sect. 1. *How warranted by Scripture.* 35

5. They who lay aside the words of the *Lord's Prayer*, are in danger to lay aside some of the Substance of it also ; particularly the Substance of that Petition, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*: For many who lay aside the *Lord's Prayer*, do neither in Terms nor substance offer this Petition to God ; nay, are so far from making this the *Condition* of their Pardon, as Christ has taught us, that they publickly dispute against the *Form* for this very reason ; Tho' Christ, who foresaw the *Objection* which our *Corruptions* would be apt to make, has Answered it, and bound it upon us indispensibly as our Duty, to ask forgiveness on these and no other Terms, *Mat. 6. 15.* And indeed, if such a Sentence had been prescribed by our *Lord*, to be only repeated by Christians once, or oftener, every Day, it would have seemed but what was necessary to mind them of that peculiar and indispensable Duty of their *Profession*. We see the Wisdom of the Ancients thought fit to reduce their *Doctrine* or *Instructions* into *Proverbs*, or *short Sentences* to be got by heart, and kept continually in memory, as of great influence for guiding Mens Lives and Actions ; and such Sentences must be of much greater influence, when repeated in the presence of God, as these in our *Lord's Prayer* are required to be.

Lastly, This Prayer being given us as a Badge of our *Profession*, a Summary of our Duty as *Christians*, and a *Form of sound Words*, it is no more lawful to alter it, than to lay it aside; and it would be the same presumption and hazard to substitute other Words instead of Christ's, in this Prayer which we are oblig'd always to use when we pray, as to change the Words of our Creed; or as it would be in a Battel to change the *Word* given by a General, or any part of it, and to retain only the signification of it. From all which 'tis manifest that God has required *Forms of Prayer* to be used by us, both in the Old and New Testament.

As to the difference we find in the *Lord's Prayer* as delivered by St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, 'tis to be observed that our *Saviour* spake in the *Syriack*, or vulgar *Hebrew*, and the Evangelists writ their *Gospels* in *Greek*: Now in the *Syriack*, one and the same word expresses both those different words which the Evangelists use in the same Petition, as *Debts* and *Trespases*, &c. So that it is no real but a *seeming* difference between them; all the different Words being the same in the Original Language in which our *Saviour* spake.

IV. As we have the *Command of God*, and the *Example of his Saints*, for offering up our Prayers to Him, in a set and prepared *Form of Words*, so we have the like Example for
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Sec. 1. How Warranted by Scripture. 37

joyning Voices, upon occasion, in offering these Words. Generally it is sufficient that the People join in their Hearts with the words of publick Prayers, yet the Scriptures warrant also, on some Occasions, their joining their Voices.

1. Thus we find the People of *Israel* addressing themselves to God, *Judges 21. 2. And the people came to the House of God, and abode there till even, before God; and lift up their Voices and wept sore, and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, &c.*

2. In Hymns and Psalms (which are also Prayers in great part, as I noted before) the People are generally allowed by all (as being fully warranted by Scripture) to join their Voices. So *Moses* and the Children of *Israel* sung unto the Lord, *Exod. 15. 1.*

3. In the New Testament we have an Eminent Example of this practice, *Acts iv. 24.* where the Apostles and their Disciples *lift up their Voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord thou art God, &c.* If this Prayer was immediately inspired, as it seems it was, then the whole assembly was inspired together, not only to think the same Thing, but likewise to utter the same Words; and the Spirit of God by it has attested the fitness and decency of a whole Congregation's pronouncing the same Prayer together. If it had not been convenient that this should be

sometimes practised in our Christian Assemblies, God would not have given us this Example. If the People were always to join in their Hearts only with our publick Prayers, it would have been so here, for the Spirit of God wou'd not have led them to do an indecent thing, or a thing unfit for God's Worship.

4. St. Paul and Silas joined also their Voices in their Prayers, as we may see from *Acts xvi. 25.* *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sung Praises unto God, and the Prisoners heard them:* I know it may be alledged, That they sung their Prayers which they offered up to God on this Occasion, and on that account joyned their Voices. I confess the Original favours this Inference; but if it be allowed that the *Apostles sung* their Prayers together, it must be allowed that they might likewise *say* them together: For we find the Blessed in Heaven offering not only their Praises together, but their Prayers also; so *Rev. vi. 10.* *They cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost thou not Judge and Avenge our Blood, &c.* From all which it is manifest, that we are warranted by the Examples of God's People, both in the Old and New Testament, to join our Voices, as well as our Hearts, in some of our publick Supplications to God; and that this practice is no New invention of Men.

V. If

Sect. I. How warranted by Scripture. 39

V. If we consult the Scripture, we shall find that it is the Priest's part to make publick intercession for the people, but yet so, that the people ought to bear a part by themselves, and answer in the Service, which we commonly call *Responses*.

I. They are commanded to do it, *Psal.* 106. 48. where after the prayers and praises of which the Psalm consists, are ended, it is added, *Let all the People say, Amen, Praise the Lord*; and accordingly we find *1 Chron.* 16. 36. that *the People said Amen, and praised the Lord*. And this is more signally observable in that Solemn service at the Dedication of *Solomon's Temple*, where we find first the Priests and Levites praising God, *2 Chron.* v. 12. And saying, *For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever*, the usual *Form* of praising so often repeated in the Psalms, particularly in the 136. which was probably used at that time. Then *Solomon* who built the Temple, performed another part of the Service, *Chap.* 6. 3. He blessed, First the people; Secondly, He blessed and thanked God for his Mercy. And Lastly, offer'd that Divine prayer of Dedication, which we find in that Chapter: Then follow the burnt Offerings and Sacrifices, which were peculiarly the Priest's share of the Service, *Chap.* 7. And God gives his Approbation of their praises, prayers and Offerings, by sending

down Fire from Heaven to consume their Sacrifices: And then last of all follows the People's part which they perform, *Chap. 7. 1.* *They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever.* This Service was Ordered by the Spirit of God, and plainly shews us, that He approved of the People's having a share or part peculiar to themselves in his Worship.

2. If it be said that this was the way of Worshipping God under the Law, which is now Abolished and Unlawful, as well as the other Levitical Ceremonies: The *Apostles* have answer'd this, by continuing this practice in the Christian Church, and by admitting the People to bear a part in the public Service, and to answer to the Prayers, have assured us that this is no Legal Abolished Ceremony. This is manifest from *1 Cor. 14. 16.* *Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks? which shews that even the unlearned had a part assigned them in the Christian Assemblies.* It may be added to this, what I observed before, (*Chap. 1. Sect. 1. N. 4.*) of the *Responses* in praising God, and of the Worship described in the *Revelations*, where the Angels and Elders representing the Clergy, and the Multitude

Sect. 2. How practised by our Church. 41

titute representing the People, bear each of them their distinct Parts; in allusion to what was done in the Christian Assemblies. And this is a clear proof, that the People bore a part, and answered to the Blessings and Prayers of him that Officiated, ever since the Christian Worship was Established.

S E C T. II.

*The Rules and Practice of Our Church,
concerning Prayer.*

HAVING thus seen the Directions and Examples which the Scriptures afford us for the publick performance of our Prayers to God, let us now consider the Worship of our Church, and compare it with Them: both as to the Words and Matter of Our Prayers; and to the comfort of us, who are of this Communion, it will clearly appear,

1. That there is not one thing we ask of God in them, which he has not particularly directed us to ask, or any thing for which we ought to pray, that is omitted. This advantage we have towards the Proof of this Point, that our Prayers are fixed and stated, and may be examined by all that have a mind to be satisfy'd in them. An Advantage we gain by putting them into a set and prepared

Form

Form of Words, according to the Commands of God, and the Examples of Holy Men; whereas 'tis impossible for such as use only *ex tempore* prayer, thus to justify their Service, because their prayers are altogether uncertain, and depend on the present thoughts of the Speaker.

2. Our Church requires the people to join their Voices with the Minister in some of the prayers, in which they are more particularly concerned, and which seem of the most general and greatest moment. Such are the general Confessions of Sin, and the Lord's Prayer.

3. Our Church has assigned for the People some short Answers or Responses to our prayers, whereby they may be stirred up to attention, and signify their concurrence with the Minister. Thus to every prayer and Blessing they are obliged to answer *Amen*, as we find the people did in the Church of *Corinth*; and to join Unanimously in some other short Ejaculations to implore God's Mercy, or beseech him to hear us. In all which I have already shewed we have the warrant of Scripture; and it is plain to any one that will be at the pains to consider our Service, that we have taken the Rules thereof from Scripture, and have not invented a Service out of our own Heads; and then (as is too often the Custom of *Innovators*) endeavoured

II. Sect. 3. *How Practised by Dissenters.* 43

devoured to make the Scripture comply with it. The first *Reformers* of Our Church would never have retain'd and prepar'd *Forms* of Prayers, had they not found such in Scripture: they would never have required the People to join their voices in some Prayers, and answer to others, if the Examples of Scripture had not lead them to it. They professed, and their Design was to make the Word of God their Rule; and we see how exactly they conformed to it in these particulars. I wish I could say as much for all other ways of Worship among Protestants.

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SECT. III.

The Practice of those who differ from Us.

I. **A**ND here I must intreat you of my Diocess, who Dissent from Our Worship, seriously to consider with me, what it is which you have substituted in the place of these things which you have intirely laid aside, tho' so expresly directed and warranted by Scripture; and examine whether your way have a solid Foundation in *God's Word*, I shall endeavour to represent it with all fairness and impartiality, and leave you to judge as God shall direct you, and as you will answer it at the last day.

And

And here I find that some of your *Writers* are of Opinion, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God in some measure, for enabling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues to express convenient desires to God; and that therefore Forms of Prayer are of no necessary use, either in Publick or Private; on the contrary, that they stint the Spirit, and hinder Men from stirring up or using the gift that God has given them.*

2. Others of you go further, and affirm that all *Forms of Prayer* are unlawful to Christians, and that therefore it is a sin to join in a Worship where they are used, or to be present at it.

3. That the Minister is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that he only is to speak publickly to God in the behalf of the People, and that they are not to join their Voices, but their Hearts only with him.

Upon these Principles you forsake our Worship, and many of you think it is a sin to be so much as present at our Religious Assemblies: It is of great importance therefore that you should understand what the Scriptures determine in this matter; for if our Worship (which you thus forsake) be plainly enjoined by scripture (as I think I have made it sufficiently appear;) and these Principles of *Your Worship*, and *Your Practice* pursuant to them, have no *Foundation* in Scripture; I cannot

Sect. 3. *How practised by Dissenters.* 45

cannot see how *You* can answer your forsaking Our Assemblies, to God and your own Consciences. Let us then consider each of these Principles apart.

II. And first, for that Position of your *not to be*
Directory, That the Spirit of Prayer is given to *found (in*
all the Children of God in some measure, for en- *terminis)*
abling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues *in the*
to express convenient Desires to God; I intreat *only*
you to consider what Promise or Foundation it *consequen*
has in Scripture. I profess to you seriously, *that*
That upon the strictest Enquiry I could make,
I never could find any such Promise made to
all the children of God, in the Old or New
Testaments, nether did I ever meet any
Dissenter that was able to shew any such Pro-
mise to furnish us with Words in Prayer,
without the use of set and premeditated
Forms. If then there be *none* such, as we
may be well assured there is not, was it not
too much presumption in the Compilers of
your *Directory*, to obtrude this Doctrine on
the World, or perswade People to depend on
it, and neglect the help of *Forms*, which
the Scripture prescribes, and recommends to
us? Nay, as there is no Promise for such ex-
traordinary Assistance to all the Children of God
to conceive Prayer, so neither is there any Com-
mand in Scripture, requiring us to worship or
pray to God in a conceiv'd, extemporary, or
unpremeditated Prayer; or so much as an
Example

Example in a settled ordinary Congregation where it was practised. If then you can shew none of these in the *holy Scriptures*, neither *Promise* nor *Command*, 'tis a plain case, that this *Doctrine* is a meer *Invention* of Men, and the *Worship* built on it a *Vanity*, in the sense of our *Saviour*, *Mark. 7. 7.* If my design were only to confute an *Adversary*, what I have already said were sufficient; but this *Spirit of Prayer* is a point of such Consequence, that I hope it will be both grateful and instructive to the Readers of all sorts, to explain it to them, and set it in as clear a light as I can; which I shall do under the following Heads.

III. 1. First therefore I doubt not but it will be granted, That whoever prayeth to God with *Faith*, *Sincerity*, *Fervency*, *Love*, *Humility*, *Conformity to God's Will*, *Understanding*, and *Decency of Expression*, prays *Acceptably* to Him, and is endowed with the *Spirit of Prayer*; and whoever prays without these, does want it.

2. I suppose no Man of himself can attain these Graces that are requisite to make our Prayers *Acceptable*, and that therefore we must have the Assistance of God's Spirit to beget them in us.

3. I suppose that it is possible for a Man to acquire, by natural means, and Ability to express himself decently in Prayer; tho he cannot

Sect. 3. *How Practised by Dissenters.* 47

cannot so acquire Faith, or any other inward Grace; so that *Decency of Expression* is the lowest part of the gift of Prayer, and not always a part of it.

4. I say that one Praying by a *Form* may have all these Qualifications, and therefore his Prayer may be acceptable to God, and proceed from his Spirit.

This may be proved to the Dissenters, 1. From the *Assemblies Larger Catechism*, which acknowledges it: For when the Question is put, *How is the Lord's Prayer to be used?* The Answer is, *The Lord's Prayer is not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make other Prayers, but may be also used as a Prayer, so that it be done with Understanding, Faith, Reverence, and other Graces, necessary to the right Performance of the Duty of Prayer.* 2. Many of the Psalms are (as I observed before) *Forms of Prayer*, and the Dissenters make no scruple to turn these *Forms of Prayers* into Meetre, and then sing them Line by Line after the Minister. As for Example: The first Verse of the fifth Psalm, runs thus, in the Translation they use,

Give ear unto my words, O Lord,
my meditations weigh;
Hear my loud cry, my King, my God;
For I to thee will pray.

This

This is as much a *Form of Prayer*, as any in the *Litany*, and by their using it as they do, they plainly practise *Praying by a Form*: And do further also allow, That *Prayers*, as well as *Praises*, may be offered to God with *singing*, and that they may repeat their *Forms of Prayer* after the Minister. With what Reason then can it be said against us, That a *Form of Prayer* sung in Verse, and after the Minister's Reading it, is Commendable; but the same said or sung in prose, is unlawful?

5. Extemporary conceived Prayers, may want these spiritual qualifications of Prayer; as I believe will not be denied by those that contend most for them, and they often are manifestly deficient; being sometimes performed without Reverence or Decency of Expression, and by some even without Understanding; and where these Qualifications are found, others may be wanting. The Scriptures observe, That a Man may make long Prayers, and yet have a Mind disposed to devour Widows Houses. He may want Faith Humility, Fervency, and Affiance in God, and yet be able to Pray without a Form: And therefore such Prayers are not always Acceptable to God.

6. Therefore when God promises the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications to his People, *Zach. 12. 10.* this promise doth not extend to enable all Men who are God's Children

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dren, to conceive with their Hearts, and express with their Mouths, convenient Desires, without a *Form*: for as I shewed before, every one to whom God gives a Heart and Disposition to pray, has the *Spirit of Prayer*, and he who from this Principle offers up his Desires to God in a *Form*, prays Acceptably; and he that offers them without that principle, tho' he do it in unpremeditated and extemporary Words, is rejected, and therefore the Spirit of Prayer is the Grace, the Heart, the Disposition and Ability to pray, and whether it be with, or without a *Form*, such a Man's Prayers are acceptable to God; and 'tis greatly superstitious to think or teach otherwise. If God give us a Heart to pray, and by his Providence hath provided us a *Form* to express our Desires in, or enables us to make one, 'tis sufficient, and we ought to be thankful.

7. In confirmation of this Account of the *Spirit of Prayer*, we may further observe,

1. That no *Worship* is acceptable to God, that is not offer'd to Him *in Spirit and Truth*, *John* iv. 24. and therefore the Scripture recommends to us *Prayers* in and by the Spirit; but that praying with the Spirit, doth not signifie extemporary, unpremeditated Prayers, or exclude *Forms*, will appear from *1 Cor.* xiv. 15. *I will pray with the Spirit, I will pray with the Understanding, I will sing with the Spirit, I will sing with the Understand-*

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ding also. Here we find *singing with the Spirit*, as well as *Praying with it*; and whoever sings otherwise, doth not worship God as he ought; but tho' we are obliged to sing with the Spirit, yet we must and ought to sing in the *Congregation*, with a set *Form of Words*, and therefore for the same Reason, tho' we *pray with the Spirit*, we may *pray by a set and prepared Form of Words*: The most *spiritual Songs* consist of a set *Form of imposed Words*, and so may the most *spiritual Prayers*. *Praying* therefore *with the Spirit* in this place, is so far from meaning, or being an Argument for the Use of extemporary unpremeditated Prayers, that it is rather an Argument against them: For either we are obliged by it to sing to God in extemporary Hymns, or we are not obliged to pray to Him in extemporary Prayers; since it is unreasonable to interpret *singing with the Spirit*, in one sence, and *praying with the Spirit* in a contrary.

2. And to confirm this further, we find the most spiritual Persons addressing themselves to God in *Forms*; so did *Moses*, so did *David*, as I observed before; and so did our *Saviour* himself on the Cross, when in his *Agony* he repeated the first Verse of *Psal. xxii.* in *Syriack*, and as some believe, the *whole Psalm*; by which Act, He recommendeth to us *Forms of Prayer* in his dying Breath, as the most proper means of expressing our
condition

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condition to God, and as most suitable to the Divine Majesty ; and therefore *Praying in the Spirit*, Ephes. vi. 18. *Praying in the Holy Ghost*, Jude 20. and *with the Spirit*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. signifie *praying with Grace in our Hearts*, by the Assistance and Motion of the *Holy Spirit* : And a Man may as well pray with Grace in his Heart, when he *prays by a Form*, as sing with Grace in his Heart, when he *sings by a Form*.

3. We have a Promise that God's Spirit will assist us with this Grace in our Hearts, but we have no Promise that He will help us to Words without the use of Forms ; as will appear from Rom. viii. 26. *The Spirit also helpeth our Infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered* ; those Inward Motions in the Heart, called here *Groanings*, are that Grace in the Heart with which we ought to pray, and to which the Spirit of God doth, and indeed only can help us, and to pray with this Grace, is to pray in and with the Spirit, whether we use Words or no ; and if we do use them, whether we reduce them into a Form first, or pour them forth as they present themselves to our Minds ; but we have no Promise that the *Holy Ghost* will always furnish us with fit words on all occasions, and therefore ought not to presume that He will.

4. 'Tis certain that he did furnish some with such Words, for we find both *Prayers* and *Hymns* dictated immediately by him, of which we have Examples in the Hymns of the Blessed Virgin and *Zacharias*, and in the Song or Prayer of *Simeon*, and in *Acts* iv. 24. But then it is manifest that this was an extraordinary Gift of God, and a part of *Prophecy*, and we may not depend on the *Holy Ghost* for this Gift, more than for any other Extraordinary Gift, till it be made appear that it was to continue always in the Church, and to be communicated to All the Children of God *Praying*, and *singing* the *Praises of God*, are Duties incumbent on all Christians; but we are no more obliged to pray *Extemporary Prayers*, from any Example of inspir'd Men in Scripture, than to sing *Extemporary Hymns* from the like Examples; to which yet none, I think, pretend.

5. 'Tis very observable that even those who composed their *Prayers* and *Hymns* by immediate inspiration, did not generally offer them to God in the Congregation till they had first reduced them into a *Form*. Thus *David* first penned his *Psalms*, and then delivered them to be sung, 1 *Chron.* xvi. 7. and 'tis probable the *Prophets*, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 26. did the same, for they are supposed, every one to have a *Psalms*, a *Doctrine*, a *Tongue*, a *Revelation*, &c. that is, to have them ready, and reduced into
Form

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Form for the use of the Church when they came together. That this is the meaning of *having a Psalm, &c.* in this place, will appear very probable, not only from the word; which naturally import this, and can hardly be otherwise interpreted, but likewise from the *Apostles* making a difference between what these *Prophets* had prepared, and what was revealed immediately at the time of their being together, *vers. 30.* *If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.* Which shews that these *Psalms, &c.* were to give place to such as were immediately inspired: So far were these inspired Men from countenancing an extemporary, unpremeditated way of serving God, except where there was an immediate *Revelation* for it, and so utterly void of Scripture proof is this great principle of the *Dissenters* Worship, that the Spirit of Prayer is given to every one of the Faithful to enable them to conceive with the Heart, and express with their Tongues their necessities to God without a Form of Prayer.

8. It lies therefore, my Friends, on your Teachers who are of this persuasion, to produce plain Scripture for your principles, or else to confess that you have laid aside *Prayers by Forms* commands by God, and practised by *Holy Men* in Scriptures, to make room for this way of *Praying* of Men's own invention. But further, that place, *Eccl. v. 1, 2.* seems to

me to afford a strong Argument against such Prayers, *When thou goest to the House of God,*
— *Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth: Therefore let thy words be few.* It is hard to say what it is to be rash with our Mouths, or hasty to utter any thing before God, if it be not rashness to trust the expressing all our desires to such uncertain and unpremeditated words, as our invention suggests unto us, when we come before him, which (as I have shewed) the Scriptures give us no promise of being supplied to us by the Spirit on ordinary occasions. I appeal to you whether it would not be looked on as rashness for an ordinary Person to speak to a Prince, or solemn Assembly, concerning a Matter of great Moment, in Words unpremeditated and unformed, and we shall hardly find any so rash as to venture on it. King Solomon here seems to have recommended the same Modesty to Men in their Addresses to God.

But in as much as God has not expressly forbidden all *extemporary* Prayers, I would not be understood by this to condemn all such as unlawful. There may be some Men (tho' not very many) able to express themselves significantly and decently, *extempore*; and there are some occasions that require it even in Publick; and on these occasions, when

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when a Man has not time allowed him to reduce his Desires into *Form* before he offers them, he may depend on the assistance of God's Spirit, as we may in all other cases of Necessity, or at least hope for Pardon of course to our Infirmities: But to depend on that Spirit, and neglect the Means God has given us to provide our selves, looks so like tempting him, that we ought carefully to avoid it: And I find prudent modest Men are aware of this, and tho' they be very famous for extemporary Prayer, yet they pray really as much by a *Form* as if they had the *Common-Prayer* before them. The Secret is only this, they compose *Forms of Prayer* of several sorts, digest them well in their Minds, and commit them to Memory; so that they can, on occasion, transpose the Parts of them, change, add, or leave out, as they see Reason; and thus they are, in effect, provided with a *Form*, tho' the People cannot perceive it, and admire them for their readiness and fluency. It is easie for any Man of moderate Parts to manage the Matter thus, but the more ignorant and ordinary Preachers that know not, or are not capable of the Method of it, fall into very indecent and vain Repetitions, and are often at a loss when they strive to practise this way of Addressing to God.

Another Account may be given of these seeming Extemporary Prayers not much different from the former, namely, That good Men who make a Conscience of secret Prayer to God, and have grown up in a constant Discharge of this *Duty*, do by degrees fall into a *Form* even with themselves; for how much soever their Prayers were *Extempore* at first, yet having *continual* Occasion of praying to God for the same things, they find in time that there is but one best way of expressing the same thing; which necessarily leads to a *Form*. However, the various Ways they made use of before they settled on one, serve them as so many *Forms* when they come in publick: And by changing of these, they seem to pray *extempore*.

10. Lastly, let me observe that the use of *Extemporary conceived Prayers*, even in cases of necessity, is founded on a general Rule of Scripture only, which commands us to ask of God what we lack: Of which Rule our own prudence makes the Application in such extempore occasions, but when we set up this Humane Application of this general Rule in opposition to that particular manner of asking, commanded by God, and practised by *Holy Men*, which is by set, and premeditated *Forms* in the ordinary Worship of God, and turn God's way out of his Worship to make room for one of our own: This

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is to displace a particular Command of God on pretence of guiding our selves by a general one: In which we are not only more liable to mistakes, but we fail of paying due respect to God's Directions. For general Commandsought only to take place in such Cases where God has not laid down a particular Rule.

And thus I have examined the First Principle of *Dissenters*; *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God, whereby they are enabled to Conceive with the Heart, and Express with the Mouth convenient Desires to God.*

IV. I come now to speak to the Second; *That all Forms of Prayer are Unlawful to Christians; and that it is a Sin to join in a Worship where they are used, or so much as to be present at it.* If there be any of you for whom I intend these Papers, of this Opinion, as I fear some of you are, and all of you do in your Practice comply with those that maintain it, and therefore cannot acquit your selves from countenancing it; I desire you to observe, That if there were no Harm in the Opinion, or if it were a meer Speculation, we should not be much concerned at their Mistake. But by what I have shewed of the Scripture Authority of *Forms*, it is plain, That they who maintain this Principle, do not only teach for *Doctrines the*
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Commandments of Men; but, in effect, set themselves up above Christ, and countermand what he has required. They not only add to the Gospel a new Command, by teaching that to be Unlawful, which Christ has no where Condemned; but they teach that to be Unlawful, which he has positively Commanded. Whoever therefore do Teach *Forms of Prayer* to be Unlawful, or Countenance those that do Teach this Doctrine of Men, cannot acquit themselves from the Imputation of Resisting the *Holy Ghost*, by whose Inspiration the Word of God is penn'd.

I can foresee only One thing that can be alledged in favour of those who maintain this Opinion: And 'tis, That to Pray *with*, or *without a Form* (excepting the *Lord's-Prayer*) is in itself indifferent; and that therefore the asserting the Use of *Forms*, is not a Matter of such weight, as to justify our Contending with our Brethren about it; and that it seems Uncharitable in us to insist on a thing which they are fully perswaded is Unlawful, and we our selves count indifferent.

1. But in Answer to this, it is to be observed, *First*, That an Opinion which necessarily divides him who believes it from the Communion of all the Established Churches in the World, cannot be of so little moment as the Objection would make it. And such is
this

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this Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms of Prayer*; since there neither is, nor has been any Established Church these 1500 Years, but has maintained their Lawfulness, and used them in the Service of God; and therefore whoever believes them to be Unlawful, in whatever Age he had lived, he must have separated from all the Established Churches of the World at that time: and surely an Opinion that necessarily produces such a Division, must be of mighty Consequence, whether true or false, and ought to be carefully examin'd; and if false, to be zealously opposed. But,

See Durel and
Knox's Book of
Disc.

2. I suppose it will be granted, That Eating Swin's Flesh, or Drinking Wine, are as indifferent as using a *Form of Prayer*, and of less Concern to the Souls of Men; and that therefore to Teach these to be Unlawful; would be as innocent a Mistake, as to Teach the Unlawfulness of *Forms*. For if we compare these two doctrines together, and the Mischiefs that each of them have, or may hereafter produce; it is hardly conceivable, that the forbidding the Use of some particular Meats, should have so many ill Effects as the Forbidding *Forms of Prayer* has had already. Yet it is observable how St. Paul judges of that Doctrine, 1 Tim. 4. 1. In the latter

latter times (saith he) *some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and Doctrines of devils* — Forbidding to marry, and to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving. You see here St. Paul counts it a Departure from the Faith, and a Doctrine of Devils, to forbid, as Unlawful in itself, any sort of Meat which God has created for the Use of Man: And if it be so Criminal, to Teach any sort of Meat to be Unclean, when God has not Forbidden it; then sure, to Teach a *Form of Prayer* to be Unlawful, when God has Commanded it, must be a very ill Doctrine. And this Consideration alone ought to make those who maintain it, or any such Doctrine whereby they are obliged to condemn their Brethren as practising unlawful Things, to examine it carefully and impartially by the Word of God, lest they be imposed on by seducing Spirits.

The great Design of the Devil, is, to bring us into an entire Subjection to his Will. But when he despairs of this, his next Attempt is, to share with God in our Obedience; and impose new Commands of his Own upon us, as if they were God's, and so to procure himself to be obey'd. This he doth most successfully, by giving them an Appearance of Religion, and of more then ordinary strictness. Thus in St. Paul's time under colour of Mor-

tification

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tification, he forbid *Meats* and *Marriage*, as unlawful, which God had allowed; speaking *Lyes in Hypocrisie*, and under shew of Religion. And thus, 'tis to be feared, he has prevailed on some, under colour of greater *Spirituality*, to abstain from *Forms of Prayer*, as Unlawful, which God has enjoined.

And here it is very remarkable, That where-ever the Devil gains this Point with Men, and brings them to believe a thing to be forbidden by God, which he has not forbidden, he soon brings a super-added *Command* of his Own, in *Competition* with some of God's, and prevail with them to prefer *his* Commands to God's; and so plungeth them into direct *Disobedience*, which was his Design at first. Thus when he had prevailed with Men to abstain from *Marriage*, they soon fell not only to *Commit Fornication*, but even, in some cases, to *Allow* it, rather than *Marriage*, (as the *Papists* do.) And by perswading Men to abstain from *Forms of Prayer*, as Unlawful, he has deprived them, in many places, of all Opportunity of *Publick Worship*; and made them chuse rather not to serve God at all in Publick, than with a *Form*; which is the Case of many Thousands now in this Kingdom, who worship God publicly no where. But,

3. This Doctrine, of the Unlawfulness of *Praying by Forms*, is no such indifferent thing, that

that we may safely indulge Men in their own sense about it ; since it is very apt to puff them up, and make them take false measures in judging of their own Condition, and of the influence of God's Spirit upon them.

We know that all *good Men* have the Spirit of God, and are guided and influenced by it in the whole tenor of their Lives ; we make no doubt but they are assisted by Him in their Prayers, but no less in forgiving an Injury, or resisting a Temptation; and his influence on a good *Man's* Mind is rather greater and more sensible in these and other Acts of Religion, than in Prayer. Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Godness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, are the Fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. And it is principally by these we ought to conclude that we have that Spirit. But the Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms of Prayer*, on a persuasion that *the Spirit of God* enables every Child of God to conceive with the Heart, and express with the Mouth suitable desires, entitles every one to God's Spirit in some measure, that is able to express himself in apt and fluent Words, tho' without the other Graces of the Spirit, and exposes every one to despair, that is not able to do this, as looking on himself to be destitute of the Spirit, tho' otherwise meek, humble, and charitable, and endowed with such Graces as are much more certain signs of his presence. Nay, so far are many deluded

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deluded by this *Opinion*, that they judge themselves or others, Children of God, and in his Favour, according as they are more or less endowed with this Gift, without respect to other Qualifications. And I dare appeal to *your selves*, Whether some very *Immoral Persons* guilty of *gross* and *scandalous Crimes*, have not been eminent for this *Gift of Prayer*? And whether such Persons are not apt to flatter themselves that they are the Children of God, and endowed with his Spirit, notwithstanding all their Wickedness? And it is impossible either to convince these Persons of their mistake, or to comfort *poor ignorant People*, dejected only for want of this Gift, whilst they are possessed with this *Opinion* of the Unlawfulness of *Forms*.

Which in the 4th. place ought not to be countenanced or indulged as an indifferent thing, because it has been a great hindrance to secret *Devotion*: Every Christian ought at least twice a Day to address himself to God in secret Prayer; but a great part of the *World* cannot do it without a *Form*; *Children* and *ignorant Persons* are at a loss for *Words*, and even *other People*, are often not able to find them *readily*, especially when wearied, dull, or indisposed, as is sometimes the *condition* of the best Christians; this makes secret Prayer, at least a *constant regular course* of it, uneasy to most that are absolutely against all Use
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of *Forms*, and it occasions too many to neglect it, which otherwise would not: And as for *Children* and *Ignorant People* amongst those of this Perswasion, I am well assured many of them never bow their Knees in secret to God; and several of those that are grown up, are forced to speak aloud, or cannot pray at all, which is against the nature of secret Prayer; and exposes not only the Persons that use it to the censure of *Hypocrisie*, but the Duty to *Contempt*. 'Tis on this account that the Pious Custom of Training up *Young People* to a *constant course of Devotion*, in their Morning and Evening secret Prayers, is too universally laid aside among you, as I have found by experience, and for the truth of the Observation I dare appeal to all of the *Dissenters*. On the contrary, I am well assured that there cannot be a more effectual or easie method to revive and continue this regular and constant use of secret Prayers, than to oblige every one to some certain *Forms* every Morning and Evening, which they may not omit, whatever other Prayers they use: But this can never be done whilst the Opinion of the unlawfulness of *Forms* prevails; and therefore all good People are obliged to oppose it, as they would retrieve the constant use of secret Prayers; which shews that this is no indifferent matter, as the objection would suggest, but of great weight, and fit to be contended for. I will

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I will not mention some *other Reasons* that are of great moment, because they would but exasperate, and tend to make the Duty of Prayer, when performed *extempore*, ridiculous, which ill Men might extend (as it to often happens) to expose *Devotion* in general; such are the indecent Expressions which sometimes fall from Persons that pray thus: I will only observe to you, that *Ex-temporary Prayers* of some Preachers have too often given occasion of Offence to serious Persons even among your selves. 'Tis certain, that to print some of them, as they have been spoken, as those that we make use of are printed, would not be for the *Honour* of the *Holy Spirit*, to whom they are ascribed, nor much recommend them to serious Men. But I esteem it an ill thing for Men to ridicule one anothers *Devotion* whatever it is.

V. There remains yet the Third Opinion of *Dissenters* which they advance against us in this matter of Prayer, to be Examined, *That the Minister is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that the People have nothing to do but to joyn with him in their Hearts*; An Opinion far from any Authority of Scripture, which expressly requires us, *Rom. 15. 6.* with one Mind, and one Mouth, to glorifie God: We produce this, and many other Places and Examples in Scripture, for the People's joyning their Voices, and bearing a part in their Praises

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and Prayers; and we are assured there is no Scripture forbids it; and therefore when you Condemn it, or teach it to be Unlawful, we must charge it upon *You*, as an instance of *Your Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*. Which is all I think needful to be said to this Head, after what I have shewed before in defence of our contrary practice from Scripture; and, I think, sufficient to induce you seriously to consider it.

And thus, I presume, I have faithfully examined the Rules and Examples the Scriptures afford us for the performance of that part of our publick Worship that consists in Prayers, and compared the Service of our Church, and the *Dissenters* way of Praying, with them, and made it appear that our performance of this Duty, both as to the Matter and Manner, is agreeable to the Commandments of God, and to the Examples of Holy Men recorded in Scripture: And that the Service the *Dissenters* have substituted in the room thereof, has in many particulars laid aside God's Commands, and deserted the Examples of Scripture, and is in the main part thereof and immediate *Invention of Men*.

And I intreat you who are of this Perswasion, and adhere to these Principles of Worship which I have now mentioned, and shewed to be disagreeable to Scripture, to consider

der seriously whether you are not thereby literally guilty of that Sin with which our Saviour taxeth the Jews, *Mark 7. 7. of Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; And also of that Superstition condemned by St. Paul, *Col. 2. 21. which saith, Touch not, taste not; handle not*, (that is, which teaches to forbear those things which God has made Lawful) *after the Doctrines and Commandments of Men*: And I beseech God to enlighten your Minds to make a true Judgment in it, that you may deliver your Souls.

C H A P. III.

Of HEARING.

S E C T. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning it.

I. **O**NE great Design of our Christian Assemblies is *Hearing*, and that which is to be heard is *the Word of God*. I shall proceed in examining this, in the same manner as I have done in the former Chapters; And consider, First, What Directions the Scriptures afford us for the publick performance

of this Duty. Secondly, Shall compare our own practice with them. And, Thirdly, That of the *Dissenters*.

First then, God has positively Commanded us to read His *Word* in our publick Assemblies. So *Deut.* 31. 10. *In the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place where the Lord shall choose, Thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their Hearing. Gather the people together, Men, Women and Children, and thy Stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the Words of this Law. And 'tis observed, Jos. 8. 35. that there was not a word of all that Moses Commanded, which Joshua read not before all the Congregation.*

Neither was this confined to their Solemn Assemblies at *Jerusalem*; It was likewise a constant part of their *Sabbath Service* in their Synagogues. As we may learn from *Acts* 13. 14. where it is observed, that *Paul and Barnabas went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down; and after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the Rulers of the Synagogues sent unto them, &c. and St. Paul takes notice, verse 27. that the Prophets were read every Sabbath-day, meaning undoubtedly in their Assemblies. And St. James (Acts 15. 21.) of Moses his being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day.*

II. This

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II. This reading the Law was the great, and most effectual means God provided for preserving the knowledge of himself amongst his People; and where it was omitted, the People immediately sunk into Idolatry; and the best Reformation began, and was carried on by Restoring this Ordinance. Thus 'tis observed of *Josiah*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 29. that he gathered together all the *Elders* of *Judah* and *Jerusalem* — And all the *Inhabitants* of *Jerusalem*, and the *Priests* and the *Levites*, and all the people great and small, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the *Covenant* that was found in the *House* of the *Lord*. The like is observed of *Ezra*, *Neh.* 8. 3. And he read therein before the street that was before the *Water-gate*, from *Morning* until *Mid-day*, before the *Men* and the *Women*, and all that could understand. 'Tis remarkable that after the *Captivity*, the *Jews* never fell into *Idolatry*: and the chief reason given by themselves was the strict Observation of this Ordinance of God, the Law being constantly read to them afterwards publicly in their *Synagogues*; so powerfully doth God bless his own Ordinances to preserve those that use them from Error and Sin.

III. From the practice of the *Synagogue* in reading the *Law* and the *Prophets*, the like Order was brought into the *Christian Church*; and *Reading* was made a part of the *Office*

of the *Christian Elders*, as it was before of the *Jewish*. And hence it is that *Timothy* is Com-
manded by *St. Paul*, *1 Tim. 4. 13. To give at-*
tendance to reading as well as to Exhortation and
Doctrine. And the inspired Writings of the
Apostles were read in the *Christian Assem-*
blies, as well as the *Law* and *Prophets* among
the *Jews*; according to *St. Paul's* Command,
Col. 2. 16. When this Epistle is read amongst you,
cause that it also be read in the Church of the
Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the Epistle
from Laodicea. And it was but reason, since
the Gospel contained the *Christian Law*,
that it should be read in the *Christian Assem-*
blies, as well as the *Law of Moses* was in the
Synagogues. And that it was so read in the
first *Christian Assemblies*, I might shew by
many Instances out of the *Ancient Fathers*,
if there were occasion.

IV. This publick Reading the Law was of
so great Reputation, that it is termed *Preach-*
ing it; as we may see from *Acts 15. 21. For*
Moses of old time hath in every City them that
preach him, being read in the Synagogues every
Sabbath-day. The word *Preaching* has a pecu-
liar sence in the *New Testament*, and signifies
properly to Declare or Proclaim the Word of
God, as a *Herauld* or *Cryer* proclaims the
Laws or *Orders* of a King. Hence only
those that Proclaim'd the Gospel to such as
had not heard it before, or read the *Old Testa-*
ment

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ment to the People, are said to *Preach*. *Preaching* is distinguished from *Teaching* and *Exhortation*; and 'tis observable, that in the whole *New Testament*, tho' reading the Scriptures is called *Preaching*, yet interpreting them, applying them, or exhorting the People from them in a Christian Auditory, is never called by that name.

If it be objected that St. Paul is said to *preach* to the Disciples, *Acts* 20. 7. when he only in probability made a Sermon, or Exhortation to Believers, as is usual now; I answer, that the Original of this Word (*διαλέγομαι*) is never translated *preach* in any other place of the New Testament, and should not have been here, but *discours'd*, *disputed*, *spoke*, or *reason'd*; so it is translated in *Acts* 17. 2, 17. 18, 19. 19. 8, 9. *Heb.* 12. 5, &c. for the Original Words which properly signify *preaching*, are *κηρύσσειν* and *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι*. From all which it is manifest that there are only two ways by which the Word of God is properly *preach'd*; the first is, when it is declared to those that never heard of it before; and the second is, when the very words of the Scripture are read publickly to the People as a Cryer doth a *Proclamation*, which he doth not word himself, but reads it in the words in which it is delivered to him.

In short, The Scriptures are *Sermons* out of the Mouth of God, being dictated by his

Holy Spirit; for the Reading of which to the People for their *Conviction and Instruction*, there is a peculiar *Command of God*; and where this *Ordinance* is duly observed, they are sure of the *Word of Life*; and 'tis impossible they should be ignorant of their Duty, for the *Scriptures* are sufficient to make them wise to *Salvation*; and the hearing them with *Humility and Attention*, is a Means sufficient to beget *Faith* in the Hearts of those that hear them; for they are profitable for *Doctrine*, for *Reproof*, for *Correction*, for *Instruction in Righteousness*, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good Works, as we see *1 Tim. iii. 16, 17.*

V. We find in *Holy Scripture*, that the *Publick Reading of the Word of God* was with great Solemnity. 'Tis observed *Nehem. viii. 5.* When *Ezra* opened the Book, all the people stood up, and *Ezra* blessed the Lord, the great God; and all the people answered, *Amen, Amen*, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground; and I find it generally agreed, that both the Readers and Hearers stood up whilst the Law was read, tho' not when other things were read or taught; hence it is observed, *Luke iv. 16.* that our Saviour stood up for to read; and *Vers. xx.* after closing the Book, that he sat down to teach: Hence, *Rev. 5.* God is represented in allusion

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sion to the *High-Priest*, with a Book in his Right Hand, containing the Revelations of his Will; and the Lamb, as his Minister, takes it out of his Hand to declare the Contents of it; and *Vers. viii.* *When he had taken the Book, the four Beasts and four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb.*——— *And they sung a new song: The Angels join with them, Vers. 11. and the whole Creation, Vers. 13.* From whence we see the Scriptures teach us to receive the Revelations of God's Will out of the Book of Life, with Adoration and Praises: And therefore we find that at the reading the Law, Confessions, and Praises of God, were intermixed, and succeeded one another, *Neb. ix. 3.* *And they stood up in their place, and read in the Book of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the Day, and another fourth part they Confessed and Worshipped the Lord their God.*

VI. We find that the Word of God is to be read in such a Language as the People understand. After the Captivity, the People being Born and Educated in a strange Land, their Language was changed, and they did not understand, at least Universally, the pure Hebrew in which the Law was first written; therefore when *Ezra* read in the Law, a certain number of the Priests and Levites interpreted the Words of the Law, as *Ezra* read them to the People: *Neb. 8.*

8. *And*

8. *And they caused the people to understand the Law, and the people stood in their place; so they read in the Book, in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sence, and caused them to understand the reading: And this Custom continueth among the Jews to this Day: first the Hebrew Text is read, and then a Translation or Paraphrase, in a Language understood by the Hearers. And indeed there may be good reason for reading the Originals in Publick Assemblies, such a Custom being an effectual means to preserve the knowledge of them; but they cannot be useful to the People without a Translation. Therefore St. Paul doth not absolutely forbid speaking in Unknown Tongues in the Church, but orders, 1 Cor. xiv. 27. Let one interpret; but if there be no Interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church.*

VII. We find that after reading the Word of God, there was sometimes an Enlargement or Comment on some part of it, and an Exhortation to the People: Thus when our Saviour had read a portion of Scripture, He applied it to the People in a Discourse to that purpose. But it doth not appear that this was constantly done, on the contrary it is rather probable that it was not. For had there been a constant Provision for such Enlargement, and Exposition of the Law, and Exhortation from it, there had been no occasion for the
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the Rulers of the Synagogue, *Acts 13.15.* to send to *St. Paul* and *Barnabas*, after the reading of the Law and Prophets, that Message we find there, *Ye Men and Brethren, if ye have any Word of Exhortation for the People, say on.* *St. Paul* supposes him who *Teaches*, and him whose Office it was to *Exhort*, distinct from him that *Ruled*, and him that *Ministred*, *Rom. xii.* And it doth not appear that every Church was furnished with all these *Officers*. The same *St. Paul* joined *Exhortation* and *Doctrine* with *Reading*, in his Charge to *Timothy*, *1 Tim. iv. 13.* which shews that they went together, but whether indispensibly or no, doth not appear; tho' it is manifest in the practice of most Churches in the Ages after the Apostles they were all generally exercis'd in the Publick Worship.

VIII. Lastly, We find that they had a *Summary* of the Principle Doctrines of the Gospel, which they delivered to the People, and by which they ordered their own Discourses, and judged of what was delivered by others. Thus *St. Paul* to *Timothy*, *2 Tim. i. 13.* *Hold fast the Form of sound Words which thou hast heard of Me; and Chap. ii. Vers. 2.* *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others:* Perhaps this may be that proportion of Faith according to which

which the Prophets are exhorted to prophesie, *Rom. xii. 6.* I think it is not doubted but this *Form of sound Words* contained the main Fundamentals of Christianity; and *St. Paul* tell us what those were, *Heb. vi. 1, 2.* *Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and on of Laying on of Hands, and of the Resurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.* In all probability therefore, the *Form of sound Words* delivered by *St. Paul* to *Timothy*, and by him to others, contained these six Heads or Principles of Christianity, which every Christian was obliged to hear and learn.

S E C T. II.

*The Practice of Our Church in Reading
and Preaching the Word.*

THese are the Rules and Examples the Scriptures propose to us for our feeding the People with the Word of Life, and their Hearing it in Publick. Let us in the second place compare the *Practice of Our Church* with them, and surely no Copy can come nearer the Original.

I. For

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1. For first, Our Ministers are expressly oblig'd in their Ordination, diligently to read all the Canonical Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Testament* unto the People Assembled in the Church where they shall be appointed to serve.

2. Our Church has disposed the Holy Scriptures in a certain Order, and has appointed four or more Chapters to be read every day in the Publick Congregations, by which means all the most edifying parts of the *Old Testament* are Ordered to be read once a year, and the *New Testament* (except the *Revelations*) thrice in the same time; And some select Chapters of the *Revelations* are appointed on extraordinary occasions. There are indeed some Chapters (about one tenth) of the *Old Testament*, left out of this Order: But then it is to be observed, that those which are left out, are either Genealogies, Names of Persons and Places, Historical Repetitions, or some obscure and mystical Prophecies in *Ezekiel*, which are not so proper for an ordinary Assembly (for which reasons, some part of the *Revelations* is also left out) yet these are not excluded, tho' not particularly Commanded. The general obligation on every Clergy-Man in his Ordination to read all the Canonical Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Testament*, still allows him to read these, and also obliges him to it
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when he shall perceive that it may be for the edification of the People.

3. Besides this Order for the whole Scriptures, on every *Lord's-day*, and other solemn occasions, there are appointed certain select Portions out of the Epistles and Gospels to be read, which are adapted to the occasion; and contain some great mystery of our Faith, or other weighty matter necessary to our Edification.

4. For the more solemnity of these readings; Our Church joins with each of them Praises, Thanksgivings or Confessions, according to what we find practised in the *Holy Scriptures*.

5. That the People may benefit, and be Edified by *bearing* the Word of God, a plain Authentick and most excellent Translation is provided by publick Authority, in which the Scriptures are read to the People. This was the first Care of our Church in the Reformation, and the generality of *Dissenters* are forced to be beholden to it for the word of Life, and draw all the knowledge that they have from the Fountains with our Bishops opened for them, by Translating the word of God, and putting it into a Language they understand.

6. 'Tis ordered in our Church that the Ministers shall explain some part of the *Holy Scriptures* every *Lord's day*, and exhort their Congregations in a Sermon

7. To

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7. To inculcate the great Mysteries of our Faith the better, our Church has appointed certain solemn times, wherein once in the year they are obliged to explain, and inculcate every great Mystery of our Faith, and most material passages of the Gospel. Such are the Conception, Birth, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Saviour.

Lastly, There is provided a *Form of Sound Words* in a short and plain Catechism; in which are contained the first principles of the Oracles of God; this is adapted, as it ought to be, to the capacity of Children, and is indeed *sincere Milk*, without School Notions, or hard words. And all the six Principles which the Apostle mentions, *Heb. vi. 1, 2.* are briefly explained in it, and yet largely enough to make those that attend to it, wise to Salvation. The Teaching and Explaining these Fundamentals, is a part of our Publick Instruction, and enjoined as a constant Duty on Ministers and People in our solemn Worship. The Minister in each Parish being required diligently upon *Sundays* and *Holy-days*—openly in the Church to instruct and examine so many Children of his Parish sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism, and the People are obliged to come at the time appointed, and obediently to hear.

And

And by our Twelfth Canon, for the better grounding of the People in the Principles of Christian Religion, 'tis ordained, That the Heads of the Catechism being divided into so many parts as there are *Sundays* in the year, shall be explained to the People in every Parish Church.

This is the care our Church has taken to Teach the People in their Publick Assemblies, and the method is so effectual, that 'tis scarce conceivable how any one who duly conforms to these orders should be ignorant of any thing that concerns his Soul.

And by the Blessing of God, the effect is such that we may affirm without Vanity or Partiality, that our Clergy, and Laity, especially where we can prevail with them to conform to the Rules of our Church, are generally much more knowing, modest, governable, devout and charitable, than perhaps may be found in any other Church, of which our late contests with the *Papists*, and behaviour under their Government, and since the present Revolution, are Evident proofs.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

*The Practice of the Dissenters in Hearing
and Reading the Word.*

I Come now to consider with you my Friends who dissent from us, how this great Duty of Teaching the People the Law of God is perform'd in your Assemblies, and to compare your practice in this point with the Scripture Rules and Examples. Which I shall do with the same Candour and Integrity that I have hitherto endeavoured to observe.

I. And here I must needs say that your Teachers seem to have had very little Regard, either to Scripture-Rules or Examples in framing this part of your Worship, having laid aside all those methods of instruction that the Scriptures recommend to us, except it be that of Exposition and Exhortation: Which among you is called *Preaching*, in so much that tho' a Man frequent your Meetings all his Life, yet he has no security, or hardly possibility of learning from your publick Teachings all the great Mysteries of his Religion, or the necessary principles of his Faith.

1. For first, Your Preachers are intirely left to their choice what place of Scripture they will explain, or what Subject they will handle: And hence it happens that hardly
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any one Man in his life ever goes through the necessary Articles of Faith, or of Practice in his publick Sermons, and for the Truth of this, I appeal to your selves.

2. You have no summary of Principles enjoined to be either Read or Taught in your Publick Assemblies. A Catechism you have, but neither your *Directory* nor *Practice* make it any part of your *Lord s-day-Service*: And besides, your Catechism is such, that it no ways answers the design of a *Form of sound Words*. I have already shewed, that such a *Form* should contain only the first and necessary Principles of the *Oracles of God*, in such Words and Methods as may make it easily apprehended and retained by the weak and unlearned, which make up the bulk of the People. But your Catechism is full of *Hard Words*, *School Terms*, and *Abstruse Notions*, no wise necessary to be known by the generality of Christians, or possible to be understood by Children, or unlearned Persons, for whose Edification principally a Catechism ought to be contrived. Besides all this, it is so long and intricate, even the *Shorter*, that not one Child in ten ever gets it by heart, nor one in Five hundred retains it, as I have found by experience, and desire that you would judge of this matter as you find upon Trial. Lastly, After all, it is imperfect; some of the Principles of the *Apo-*
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files Catechism, being quite left out of it, I mean *laying on of Hands*, joyned with *Baptism*, Heb. 6. 2. A great defect sure in a Catechism to leave out a Fundamental of Christianity.

II. But the most sad and deplorable defect of your performance of this Duty, is your casting out the reading of the Word of God, from most of your Publick Assemblies, directly contrary to *God's Institution and Ordinance* for the *Instruction* of his Church; inso-much that in many of your Meetings, setting aside a Verse or two for a *Text*, or *Quotation* at the discretion of the *Teacher*, the Voice of God is never publicly heard amongst them. This is matter of Fact, and undeniable; and in all the Meetings in the *North of Ireland* in a whole Year, perhaps there is not so much Scripture read, as in one Day in our Church, by the strictest Enquiry which I cou'd make. One would think this alone were sufficient to shew the People where the *Worship of God* is to be found in its Purity, and to prove our Assemblies to be the *True Church of God*, against all that come in competition with us; whereof some hide the *Word of God* in a strange Language, and others Banish it out of their Meetings. It being in our Congregations only, that the Voice of God is heard speaking to his People, without cover or gloss. Sure it is a sad thing

that a Man may go to most Meetings many Years, and never hear one intire Chapter read in them. Now this omission is the more inexcusable in you, and must render you manifestly self-condemned.

1. First, Because you so vehemently press the necessity of *Preaching*, and quote the *Holy Scriptures* to prove it. In which, reading the *Law* (as is shewed before) is termed *Preaching*, *Acts*. 15. 21. but interpreting the Scriptures, applying them, or exhorting the Congregation from them in a fixed Christian Auditory (which you count *Preaching*) is never called so in the whole New Testament. Therefore by laying aside the reading the Scriptures in your Publick Assemblies, you have intirely cast aside Preaching in the proper Scripture sence of it. But,

2. This must render you self-condemned, because you pretend to honour the Holy Scriptures above other Christians: Your Mouths, Commendably and with just Reason, are continually full of the Praises of the Holy Bible; you own it, with the generality of the Reformed Churches, for the only sufficient Rule of Faith; you appeal to it, and seem to found your selves on it: And yet your not allowing the Reading of it a constant place in your Religious Assemblies, makes it seem as if you had a very low Opinion of it in your Hearts. If you really value

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lute it as you profess, why do you banish the Reading of it from your publick Worship, to make room for Discourses, Lectures, and Sermons of your own Teachers? Remember of whom it is said, (*Mark 7. 6.*) *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me.* While you thus juggle the Word of God out of your Solemn Meetings, to make room for your own Sermons, I beseech you to consider whether this be not a laying aside the Commandments of God for Mens Inventions; unless you will call your *Sermons*, (as some *Quakers* are said to do) as much the *Word of God* as the Bible.

III. I look on this as so material a Point, and conceive the *Honour of the Holy Scriptures* and the *Salvation of Christians* to be so deeply concerned in it, that I think my self obliged to examine the Pretences I have found to justify it: Tho' I confess they seem to me so weak, that I am afraid I shall be almost suspected by indifferent Persons not to do Justice in representing them: For it is unaccountable that any body should urge so slight Reasons for so considerable an Omission: And yet these are all I have ever meet with, or heard from you.

The first Reason I have heard urg'd, is, *That the People are obliged to read the Scriptures at home, and being thus acquainted with them,*

the Reading of them is not necessary in their public Meetings. But to this I Answer,

1. That we see from what has been said, That the Reading of the *Holy Scriptures* is by *God's Appointment* a part of his *solemn publick Worship*; therefore to leave it out in our *Assemblies*, on any pretence whatsoever, is to lay aside his *Command*, and so to corrupt and diminish his *Worship*.

2. The private performance of a Duty ought by no means to interfere with, or hinder the publick. We must pray to *God*, praise him, and instruct our Families in private; and yet *God* forbid that our doing these privately, should banish the use of them from our *Publick Assemblies*; or that any one should think himself excused from Attending on the Publick Performance of them, on account of his Private Diligence in them; And the same Rule holds for Reading the *Holy Scriptures*.

3. *God* tells the Children of *Israel*, *Deut. 6.*
6. That these Words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up — and thou shalt write them on the posts of thy house.
 Here is as much private diligence in Reading and Teaching the Law required of the *Israelites*

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raelites, as any Christian can pretend to exercise; and yet all this care to preserve the knowledge of the *Law* by private study and exercise, did not make the Reading it in their Synagogues unnecessary, or prevent God from requiring them to use it a part of his publick *Worship*, *Deut.* 31. 11. And therefore all your diligence in reading the Scriptures privately, or *Your Teachers* exhorting and requiring you to do it, ought not to warrant *Their* or *Your* dispensing with the *Command of God*, that appoints the reading his *Word*, as a part of his publick Service. But,

4. When People are left to themselves in private, they may either do, or not do a thing as they please: And we are assured, That there are many who come to Church, and hear the *Word of God* read there, that neither can, nor ever wou'd be at the pains to read it in private. It is therefore a great Temptation to the People to be negligent, and a great want of Care in a Church, to leave so material a thing as *the reading of the Word of God*, to private diligence. We find by experience, that where no publick effectual Care is taken to inform the generality of Men, the *Knowledge of God's Word* sensibly decays, and is in a fair way to be lost. The *Papists* read the Scriptures in a Language that the People do not understand, and we

see into what gross ignorance they are fallen by this means. Those of *Your Perswasion*, (generally speaking) do not read them at all in *your Meetings*, and the consequence of this is, That many of your common People are Strangers to the very History of the Bible, and the First Principles of Christianity; as I have found on Tryal, to my great trouble and astonishment. This pretence therefore of Peoples reading the Holy Scriptures in private, will by no means justify you, for breaking God's Command, in omitting the publick reading them, as a part of God's Service in the Congregations.

The Second Pretence that I have met with for this Omission, is, *That since the printing of the Scriptures, and setting of the Church by the Apostles, the case is much altered with Christians; That Printing was not then known, and consequently Copies of the Bible were few, and hard to come by: Few could then read them if they had them, and therefore (say some) Reading the Scriptures in the Assemblies was then absolutely necessary, otherwise the generality must have been Strangers to them: But now Copies of the Bible, by means of Printing, are become common, and easie to be had, and most Families have some in them that can read; And therefore the publick Reading them is not now necessary.*

1. The plain Answer to this is, First, That the Reading the Scriptures publickly is an Institution

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Institution of God: Therefore to lay it aside on the account of the Invention of Printing, is in effect to say, That Men have found out a better way to propagate the Knowledge of *God's Word*, than He instituted; and plainly to lay aside his *Command*, for *Men's own Inventions*.

2. God has promised that there shall be always *Religious Assemblies*, and has commanded his *Word* to be read in them, which is a certain means to preserve the Knowledge thereof, as long as there is a Church; but he has no where promised the constant commonness of Bibles, nor ability to People to read them at home. To omit therefore the *Institution of God for Teaching his Word*, and to rely on Peoples procuring and reading Copies of the Bible privately, is to leave God's way, and presumptuously depend on that which has no Promise annexed to it.

3. How easie soever we may imagine the obtaining Copies of the Bible, and notwithstanding the number of those that can read, there are still many Families, even amongst *Protestants*, that can neither compass a Bible, nor get any to read it, if they had one; and therefore this Expedient is no ways sufficient to supply the Design of *God's Institution*, in commanding it to be read publickly.

4. Let us suppose Bibles to be as common as we can desire, and that every one can read them

them, yet who will secure us that they will do it? People, whilst the first Fervour of a Reformation is on them, may perhaps be diligent so long as the Scripture is a Novelty to them, or Zeal for a Party inspires them; but when this wears off, as it generally does in a little time, we see by experience that their care of Reading and Meditating in the Scriptures decays with it; and there are at this Day *too many* of all Parties that neither read themselves nor hear one Chapter read in a whole Year, except at Church. And therefore to omit the publick Reading them, on presumption that the People will do it themselves, since it is so easie for them to do it, is the *ready way* to introduce an Universal Ignorance of *God's Word*, and reduce us again to *Popery*; the most effectual Bar against which, is the Bible in our own Language.

5. People may be obliged to come to the publick Congregations, and hear the *Word of God* read, though they have no inclination to it, and when they neglect, they may be re-proved or punished, but this is not practical when the Scriptures are required only to be read in private Families. Experience shews us that there is great difference between these two Methods in point of Efficacy. We see in *England* and *Wales*, where publick Reading was practised, the People generally embraced the Reformation, but in *Ireland*, where the

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the same care was not taken, they rejected it. Had *God's Way* been taken and the *Scriptures* as constantly read to the *Native Irish*, in a Language they understood, as it was in *England* or *Wales*, there is little doubt but the Reformation had succeeded as Univesally here as it did there, but the want of this has kept them in ignorance *to this Day*, which may convince us how ineffectual all our Contrivances are to enlighten Men, in respect of *God's Institution*. I am perswaded that if ever the *Native Irish* be brought to the Knowledge of *God's Word* it must be by having it read to them publickly in a Language they understand, and not by thrusting Bibles privately into their Hands; of the ineffectualness of which, we have had an Experiment 150 Years.

6. But Lastly, Instead of all other Arguments, None of us are ignorant, that the *Word of God* cannot be presumed to have the same Efficacy when read privately, as it hath when read in the Assemblies of *Christians*, according to God's appointment: Since he has given us a peculiar Promise to be present in such Assemblies. And there are no diligent *Hearers of the Word* publickly read, but are able from their own experience to testify, that they often find it to have a different force and efficacy, when they hear it read, as a part of his *Ordinance* in the Publick Assemblies.

semblies, in which he has peculiarly promis'd his Presence, than when they read it in private by themselves.

The Third Pretence I have found alledged for omitting the regular *reading the Bible* in your Meetings, is, *That it takes up too much time, and is a hindrance to the more profitable Duty, of what you commonly call Preaching.*

1. I intreat you to consider, That there is a time for every thing, and since God has appointed *reading his Word* a time and room in our Publick Assemblies, Who are we, that we should presume to throw it out? This surely is to set up our selves against God, and to think that we are able to order Things better for the Edification of his Church than he has done. Surely we ought rather to take care so to dispose our Sermons, that they may not interfere with any other *Institution of God*: But, that whatever time we allow them, there may remain sufficient for *reading God's Holy Word*; Which I have proved is in Scripture Language *Preaching*; And therefore to justify this out to make our own Discourses longer, is plainly to prefer our way of *Preaching* to God's. If there were a necessity that one or the other must be omitted, Modesty ought to teach us to omit our own Words rather than God's.

2. Suppose that upon some Extraordinary Occasion it may be *Lawful* to omit reading
God's

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God's Word in our Assemblies, that we may have the more time to manage a Discourse for the *Instruction of the People*, yet it can never be justifiable to make this a common practice; which is to put a manifest Contempt on the *Word of God*.

A Fourth Pretence against reading the *Scripture* publickly in a regular Method, is, *That they are hard to be understood, or applied, and therefore only so much of them ought to be read at a time as the Minister may explain and apply to his Auditory. And that one verse thus applied, is better than many Chapters read without such Application.*

1. It is to be consider'd, First, That it is against the general Opinion of the *Reformed Churches*, who universally teach, That the *Scriptures* are plain, in all things necessary to Salvation And therefore there is not that universal Necessity of an explanation of every place of *Scripture* that is to be read, as is pretended.

2. The *Holy Scriptures*, when heard with *Humility and Attention*, apply themselves better than any Man can do it. The *Words* of them are the *Words God*, and they have a plainness, force, and spirit in them, which no Humane Eloquence can improve, and therefore it is a great Affront to them to say that they have little efficacy except a Minister apply them.

3. Suppose one Verse well applied to be better than many Chapters (for which there is no colour) yet this would not justify the omission of reading them publickly; for no *Application* can be so well made of them whilst People are not thoroughly acquainted with them. It ought therefore to be our first care to read them to the *People* often and solemnly, that they may be acquainted with the whole Body of them, and then one word of *Application* may do more good than many Sermons to *People* not so prepared with the general knowledge of them.

The *literal* knowledge of the will of God must always go before the *saving*, and is the best *Introduction* to it. Now the reading the *Law* in the ears of the *People* is the means appointed by *God* to teach them that *literal* knowledge; and therefore while *your Teachers* have laid aside this means of *God's Appointment*, they have in a great measure debarred *People* of the *Spiritual* and *Saving* knowledge of his *Will*.

4. Fourthly, Reading a verse or two, and trusting to the Ministers *Application*, without the *Peoples* being acquainted with the whole Body of the Scriptures, does put Christians too much in the power of their *Teachers*, and makes them liable to be seduced by them. This is the very Artifice whereby the *Romish* Priests keep their *People* in ignorance; and

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your Teachers using the same Method (while it is manifest that so great a Part of their People either do not, or cannot, read them at home) seems too like a design on their *Hearers*, and tempts the World to suspect that they are afraid of the naked simplicity of the Scriptures, since they dare not trust their People with *Hearing* them *Publickly* read, except they add their own glosses to them.

The Fifth Pretence that I have met with for laying aside the publick reading the *Word of God*, is, *That the dead Letter (as some call it) is a dull formal thing, without Spirit or Life, where it is not applied to the Souls of Men, by the Spirit of God speaking in his Ministers, and that without such Assistance the Scriptures have little Efficacy on the Heart.*

I hope there are few of any Communion will own this pretence, since it is so horrid a Reflection, and Affront on the *Word of God*. I will, however in answer to it, offer these following Considerations.

1. That the *Holy Scriptures* give a Character of themselves very different from this. They represent the *Word of God*, as the *Sword of the Spirit*, as quick and powerful, as able to make a Man wise to Salvation, as giving wisdom to the simple, as converting the Soul, with many other Expressions to denote the Efficacie thereof on the Hearts of Men; and therefore to reflect on the *Word*, as dull and
formal,

formal, as a meer *dead Letter* that cannot engage the attention of the *Hearers*, or reach their *Hearts*, is too near *Blasphemy*.

2. We are certain that God speaks to us immediately by his *Holy Spirit* in his *Word*: And where *the Spirit of God is, there is Power*. But when Men speak their own *Words*, or pretend to apply the *Words* or *Passages* of Scripture, tho' they seem to do it with the greatest Zeal and Learning, yet they may be mistaken; nay, they may deceive us: And therefore wholly to lay aside the immediate Dictates of the *Holy Ghost* recorded in the Scriptures for any pretended *Explication* or *Application*, made by Men, is manifestly to exchange God's undoubted Words and Command for what may be a meer *Humane Invention*.

3. 'Tis to be considered, that the people have always been apt to grow weary of the Service of God in the way of his own appointment, and complain of it, as dull and tedious, so *Mal. 1. 13. Ye said also, what a weariness is it, and ye snuffed at it.* And the reason is because the way of God's appointing is always more Spiritual, in respect of that which is of Man's own *Invention*, and therefore it cannot be so easie or agreeable to the Carnal minds of Men.

4. It ought therefore to be considered by you, when people complain of being dull, and

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and unaffected by meer *Hearing the Word of God* read, whether this do not truly proceed from a Carnal and Wicked heart estranged from the *Spirit of God*, and whether the reason that Sermons please and effect more than a Chapter out of the *Bible* be not the novelty and outward Ornaments of them, rather than the Spirituality of the discourse. We are sure St. *Paul* supposeth such as are not affected with the *Words of God*, to be meer Natural, or Carnal Men, 1 Cor. 2. 13. where having taken Notice of speaking, *Not in Words which Man's Wisdom Teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost Teacheth*, he adds, *but the Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: For they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.* From whence it clearly follows, that the reason why Men do not understand or receive the things of God delivered to them in the *Words of Scripture*, dictated by the *Holy Ghost*, is, because they are meer Natural Men, and want the *Spirit of God*. Whoever therefore is more affected, or delights more in a Sermon than in a Chapter of the *Bible*, has reason to look into his Heart, and examine himself whether he have the *Spirit of God*. Those mentioned in Scripture that had that *Spirit* delighted in the *Law of God*: It was the Joy of their Hearts; they preferred it to all things, they meditated in it day and night:

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And were so far from turning out of their Publick Assemblies, that the *Hearing* it read was a great part of their Worship. Whoever therefore lays aside this Practice, have reason to suspect that they want that *Temper* and *Spirit* with which those *Holy Men* were inspired; and notwithstanding all their Pretences to a more than ordinary Spiritualness and Reformation, are little advanced above the Natural Men that neither receive or relish the things of God, at least not as they ought.

I find it alledged as a *Sixth Pretence* for not *Reading the Word of God* in your Meetings, *That a Child may read them, and perform this Duty; and then what need it take up the Ministers time.*

To which there needs no other Answer then that the Service of God is not less his, or the less to be valued because it is easie. On the contrary 'tis the more sinful to neglect it, the more easie it is. Ministers are not set apart for difficult things only, which others cannot perform; but they are to execute the Office that God has imposed on them, whether it be easie or difficult. As for Example: God has Commanded his Ministers to *Baptize, In the Name of the Father, &c.* Now to pour on Water in this *Form* is no such difficult thing, but a Child, or any else might perform it; Neither is there any greater difficulty in the *Sacrament* of the
Lord's

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Lord's Supper, as to the *Essentials* of it. Yet I suppose it will be granted by all, that it belongs only to the Ministers office to perform these, and that they must not delegate them, or any part of them to others, or omit them because they are easie; and that they have a quite different Sacredness, Efficacy and Force, when performed by a Person Ordained and Authorized to this purpose, than when performed by another: and the same Rule holds in offering up our Prayers, and in *Reading the Scriptures*: A Man may read them at Home, a Child may read them in Church, but they have not the same assurance of Efficacy, and a Blessing, as when they come from the Mouth of a Person set apart by God's Ordinance for this purpose.

I make no doubt but the Experience (as I have said) of most Christians, from what they have felt in their own Hearts in *Hearing the Word of God* publickly read, will attest the Truth of this. Now if you, my Friends, know and own this, as I hope the generality of you do, you must see the unreasonableness of this Pretence. If any of you do not know it, you must give me leave to say that I fear it is from ignorance, and not considering the *Scriptures*. And 'tis your *Teachers* Duty to inform you better. *Reading the Scripture* being allowed by their *Directory* to be a part of God's Publick Worship. We

have this Rule there in exprefs Words, *That it is requisite that all the Canonical Books, be read over in order, that the people may be better acquainted with the whole Body of Scriptures.* Now if you can shew but one Meeting in the last Age, in which this has been duly performed, we will not accuse you so generally of violating God's Command in this point; but if there be not one such Meeting, you ought to consider how you will excuse your selves before God. And I think it necessary here to observe to you how insignificant general Rules are without descending to a particular Determination of Circumstances. Here we have in your *Directory* a general Rule (such as it is) for *Reading* the Scripture, but for want of being particular, as the *Calendar* in our *Common-Prayer-Book* is, I question if it yet was ever once observed, or indeed that it is *Practical* to observe it. And it is so almost in every other general Rule, and therefore to leave the Service of God to be Ordered by such general Rules only, is in effect to *Teach* People to neglect it.

V. These are all the *Reasons* that I can possibly think of, or have heard urged for *Your* Practice in this Point. I will not say but others may be pretended, but I must profess that I do not remember to have met with them; If I had, I would have given them a due consideration; I am perswaded that they

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they cannot be of greater force than those I have examined. And that they can never excuse *You* in this matter, from manifest Breach of *God's Command* in preferring *Men's Invention* to his *Institution*.

After all, I must profess to *You*, That I look on all these to be only Pretences; and that the true Reason of Men's Negligence in this *Duty*, is given us, *2 Tim. 4. 3.* *For the time will come (saith the Apostle) when they will not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own Lusts shall they heap up to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears.* An itching Ear here, can signifie nothing so properly, as an Ear that loves *Novelty* and *Variety*: Because therefore our Church gives the People little that is New, in her *Prayers*, or *Reading the Scriptures*, but retains a *Form of sound Words*, in the one, and the plain *Word of God* in the other; Hence it is that some People cannot endure our Service, but heap up to themselves *Teachers*, that instead of the *Praises*, *Prayers* and *Sermons* of *God's immediate Appointment*, will gratifie them every Meeting with a *New Prayer*, without troubling them with such *Prayers* or *Sermons* as they think *old*, which are incomparably better, only the *Itching Ears* of the People, as the Apostle foretold, are pleased with the *Novelty* and *Variety* of the one, and disgust the *Reputation* of the

other, as the *Israelites* did that of *Angels Food*, *Psal.* 78. 25. *Numb.* 21. 5. and 11. 6.

It is the Duty of all Ministers and the Business of the truly Conscientious, to check and curb this Humour in the People; and notwithstanding all Discouragements, the Ministers of *Our Church*, instead of complying with them, have constantly reprov'd them for their Negligence and Levity, where they found them guilty. But as *Aaron*, to please the *Israelites*, made the *Golden Calf*, so some *Ministers* (tho contrary to their own Principles) have changed *God's Institution* to please *their People*; and left out the constant and regular Reading of *God's Word*, because *their People* grew weary of it. But let all Men judge who behaves themselves most like the *Ministers of Christ*; We, who keep to the Reading *God's Word*, according to *His own Institution*, whether the People will hear or forbear; or, They that comply with them, and lay aside *God's Command* to oblige and gain them.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

Of Bodily Worship.

S E C T. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning it.

THe Fourth Part of the Publick Worship of God, or Design of Religious Assemblies, is Visible or *Bodily Adoration*; such amongst us are *Uncovering the Head, Bowing, Kneeling*, and other outward Signs of *Reverence and Submission*, by which we openly acknowledge the *Mercy, the Justice, and Power* of God, and express the inward sense we have of these Attributes.

In treating of this Head, I will keep myself to the same *Method*, as in the former, and consider, First, The *Rules and Examples* that the *Scriptures* afford us for the Performance of this Duty. Secondly, Compare the *Practice of Our Church* with them. Thirdly, Examine the *Dissenters Practice*, and the *Reasons* they alledge for it.

1. As to the first of these we find a *Positive Command* of God, for *Bodily Worship* in Publick, *Psal. 95. 6.* O come let us Worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

The second Verse of this Psalm plainly shews us, that this is meant of Publick Worship: *Let us come before his presence with Thanksgiving.* And that this *bowing* or *kneeling* is to be Interpreted, *literally*, not *figuratively*, appears from the same Verses, where *Singing*, *Thanksgiving*, and *Psalms*, are all *literally* to be understood; and there is no more reason for understanding *bowing* and *kneeling* in a figurative sence, than the other.

II. The same *Bodily Worship* is required by the Second Commandment, which forbids us to *bow down to a graven Image*, by which words we are commanded to *bow down* to God; for it is confessed by all, and laid down as a Rule by the Assemblies larger Catechism, *That the Negative Commandments include in them the contrary Positive*; that is to say, When a Commandment forbids us any thing, it requires us to perform the Duty contrary to what is forbidden. As for Example: When the first Commandment forbids us to *have any other Gods before the Lord*, it requires us to own and worship Him for our only God: and after the same manner all other Commands are to be interpreted. By which Rule, when the *Second Commandment*, *Exod. 20. 5.* forbids us in these Words, *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them*, it requires us to practice the contrary Duties in our Addresses to God. *To bow down to Him and serve Him*, that is,

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to worship Him both with the worship of our *Bodies* and *Minds*: Therefore as he that either *bows* or *kneels*, or uses *any posture of Reverence* to a *graven Image*, breaks the Second Commandment ; so doth he who on occasion of *Publick Worship* either *refuses* or *neglects* to use some such *posture* to God. It being a *Contempt of God*, and contrary to *His Commands*, to *Pray* to Him, for instance, without some *Posture of Adoration* to Him, when we can do it, as well as it is a sin to kneel to an *Image*, without *Praying* to it, which the *Papists* pretend to do ; the one is *Idolatry*, and the other *Sacrilege* : For the Reason why we are not to bow down to an *Idol*, is, Because 'tis an *Act of Worship* due to God. And whether we give what is due to him to an *Image*, or refuse to pay it to Himself, we are equally *Robbers of God*, we deny him his *Honour*, and are guilty of *Sacrilege*.

I wish all concerned may seriously consider, and amend their Practice in this particular.

III. But the Practice of *Holy Men*, and of the *Church of God* in Scripture, are the best Interpreters of *God's Commands* ; and from them we may learn what he requires or approves in his *Worship*. Now through the whole *Old Testament*, we shall never find any one *sitting* at his *Devotions* : But on all occasions of *Worship*, especially in *Publick Assemblies*.

semblies, the People of God stood, kneeled, bowed, or prostrated themselves. 'Tis said indeed, 2 Sam. 7. 8: That King David then went and sat before the Lord: But here the Original Word is capable of another signification, and may as well be translated, that he remained, stayed, or abode before the Lord; and accordingly it is thus translated in other Places of Scripture, particularly, Gen. 22. 5. & 24. 55. & 29. 19. 1 Kings 12. 2. This place therefore is no Exception against that practice which is so evident through the whole Old Testament, that *Holy Men* worshipped God with their *Bodies*, as well as with their *Minds*.

IV. We shall find the same practised by our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, in the *New-Testament*. Our *Saviour* undoubtedly is the *Best Example* we can propose to our selves for the *Worship of God*, and we ought to imitate what he did and approved. Now if we consider the worship he offered to his Father, we shall find him addressing himself to him with *Bowing the Body*, with *Kneeling and Prostration*, as well as with *strong Cries and Tears*; so Mat. 26. 39. *And he went a little further, and fell on his Face, and prayed, O my Father, &c.* and Luke 22. 41. *He kneeled down and prayed.* And as he paid this Bodily Worship to God, so he accepted the same from Men when he was on Earth: Thus the Wise Men worshipped him in his Cradle, Mat. 2. 11. *When they saw*

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saw the young Child, and his Mother Mary, they fell down, &c. Thus they that desired to be Cured by him, addressed themselves to him, *Mark 5. 2.* When he saw him, he fell at his Feet, and besought, &c. And after the same manner, those who were Cured by him returned him Thanks, *Luke 17. 16.* Thus his beloved *Mary* came into his presence, *John 11. 32.* And *Math. 28. 9.* They held him by the Feet and worshipped him. Our Saviour looked on this Bodily Worship to be so indispensibly his due, that he accepted of it from the very Devils, and they durst not forbear to pay it to him, *Mark 3. 11.* And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, *Thou art the Son of God.* And thus the very Heathen, as well as his Disciples, approached him, even whilst he was in his state of Humiliation.

And that we may not be tempted to think, that our Saviour admitted this Bodily Worship, to be paid him only whilst he was Bodily present, we may observe St. Stephen presents his Prayer with the same posture, *Acts 7. 60.* He kneeled down and cried with a loud Voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

V. The Scriptures represent to us the First Christians thus glorifying God with their Bodies, (as St. Paul expressly commands us *1 Cor. 6. 20.*) in the Publick Assemblies, as we may learn from *Cor. 14. 23.* where the
Apostles

Apostle speaking of a Heathen coming into the Assembly of Christians, and being convinced, addeth, and so falling down on his face he will Worship God. If it had not been the custom for Christians to do thus, it would never have been expected from a Heathen, or reckoned an Argument of his Conviction. If the Church Triumphant in Heaven may be allowed a fit Pattern to us of what is decent in the Worship of God, we find them paying this Bodily Worship to God, Rev. 7. 11 And all the Angels stood about the Throne, and about the Elders, and about the Beasts, and fell on their Faces before the Throne and Worshipped God, so Chap. 4. 10. and Chap. 19. 4. And the same we find practised by the Church on Earth, Acts 21. 5. where St. Paul, and the Church of Tyre, kneeled down on the shore and prayed. After the same manner he took his leave of the Elders of Ephesus, Act. 20. 36. He kneeled down and prayed with them all. So constantly are Bodily Worship and Prayer joined together, that bowing the Knee, sometimes signifies Prayer, Eph. 3. 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. The Scriptures represent this Bodily Worship as the most proper external Act of Adoration: If we look into the Scriptures we shall not find Praying, Praising, Reading the Scriptures, or Administring the Sacraments, termed

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termed *Worship*; they are indeed *Duties* which we are obliged to perform to the Honour of *God*, but not immediate direct Acts of *Worship*, properly so called: For *Worship* is properly the subjection of our Minds to *God*; and that is a proper Act of *External Worship*, which directly signifies this subjection or submission of our Minds: But *Prayer* signifies our desires of good things from *God*, and only indirectly our subjection to him; *Praises*, immediately signify the sense we have of *God's* Excellencies, and only by consequence our submission; *Reading the Scriptures* is a means of *Instruction*, and tends to bring us to submit to *God*, but does not directly express it. And the *Sacraments* primarily signify *God's* Grace to us, rather than our submission to Him. All these may in a large sense, upon very good grounds, be look'd upon as parts of *Worship*, because they do imply such submission; but *bending* or *bowing the Body* is that which is properly in Scripture called *Worship*, as signifying immediately and naturally the *bending* and *submission* of our Souls, and nothing else.

In the *Old Testament* the Words rendered *Worship*, signify properly and originally to *bow down* or *prostrate the Body*. This is the proper signification of סגך and of שחך the latter of which in the *Second Commandment* is render'd to *bow down*, and very often when
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the Original has *they bowed down themselves*, the Translators render it *they Worshipped*. So *Psal. 95. 5.* and *Jer. 1. 16.* And *Worshipped the work of their own hands*. In the Original 'tis, *They bowed themselves down to the work, &c. Gen. 24. 52.* He *worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the Earth*. The Original has no more but *He bowed himself to the Earth to the Lord*, so *Psal. 95. 5.* And the same holds generally through the whole *Old Testament*; from whence it follows that in the Opinion of our Translators to bow ones self to the *Earth*, is that proper Act which they call *Worship*. And hence the whole *Worship of God* is signified by *bowing before him*; *Micah 6. 6.* *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the High God*; that is, *How shall I worship him acceptably?*

As to the *New Testament*, the Word generally there rendred *Worship* properly signifies a *Bodily Action* προσκύω, is Originally to pay Homage by a Kiss, as we now kiss the King's Hand, which usually was done *kneeling*; And hence *Kneeling* and *Worshipping* signifie the same thing in the *New Testament*, and the one is put for the other. Thus *Mat. 8. 2.* *There came a Leaper and worshipped him*. The same Person is said (*Mark 1. 40.*) to come, *beseeking him and kneeling to him*. Of the *Canaanitish Woman* it is said (*Mat. 15. 22.*) *That she came and worshipped him*. And *Mark* says

Sect. I. How warranted by Scripture. III

says (Chap. 7. 25.) *She came and fell at his Feet.* Luke says of the Man among the Tombs, that *he fell down before him,* (Chap. 8. 28.) *Mark, that He worshipped him,* (Chap. 5. 6.) Of *Farus, Mark and Luke say, that He fell down at his Feet.* Matthew, that *he worshipped him.* Luke 8. 40. Mark 5. 22. Matth. 9. 18. So promiscuously do the Evangelists use the Words *kneeling, or falling down, and worshipping*, to signify the same thing. Whence we may learn that when any is said to worship Christ visibly, by it is meant they *keeled to him.* And when we are Comanded to worship God in the Congregation, the meaning is, that we are required to express the submission of our Minds by *bowing our selves, or kneeling unto him.* Hence the very Soldiers that in derision *bowed their knees to Christ,* are said to Worship him, Mark 15. 19. And St. *John, Rev. 22. 8.* when he would Worship the Angel, *fell before his Feet,* to which the Angel replied, *See thou do it not ——— Worship God.* From which Text it clearly follows, that *falling down* is an Act of Worship, and that we are commanded by the Mouth of an Angel to pay it to God.

VII. We find in Scripture some Act of this *Bodily Worship* accompanying every Religious Performance. Thus Prayers are generally offered with *kneeling*, and that so
constantly

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constantly (as is observed before) that to bow the Knee, in Scripture-Language, is to pray. Thus Praises, Thanksgivings, and Confessions of Faith, are offered *standing*, 1 King. 8. 14. *And the King turned his Face about, and blessed all the Congregation of Israel (and all the Congregation of Israel stood) and he said, Blessed be the Lord, &c.* the same posture is observed, Ver. 55. 2 Chron. 20. 19. *And the Levites——stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice, 2 Chron. 29. 26. Neh. 10. 40.* And this was not a voluntary Act, but imposed on the People, as appears from Neh. 9. 5. *Then the Levites——said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God, &c.* In conformity to which, the Saints and Angels in Heaven are represented to us thus praising God, Rev. 7. 9. *They stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb——and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation, &c.* At Reading the Holy Scriptures, both Reader and People used the same posture, as appears from Neh. 8. 4, 5. *And Ezra the Scribe stood on a Pulpit of Wood——And Ezra opened the Book, and all the People stood up. And Chap. 9. 3. And they stood up in their place, and read in the Book: Which our Saviour likewise observed, Luke 4. 16.*

Lastly, They offered their Sacrifices with Bodily Adoration, 2 Chron. 29. 27. *And when the Burnt-Offerings began, the Song of the*

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The Lord began also — And all the Congregation worshipped, and the Singers sang, and the Trumpets sounded; and all this continued until the Burnt-Offering was finished. The Word, as was observed, here rendred Worshipped, signifies literally they bowed themselves down, and the meaning is, They continued prostrate, or kneeling, whilst the Burnt-Offering was offered. Thus in every Religious Performance, the Scripture has taken particular notice, and recorded to us, with what Acts of Bodily Worship it was offered up unto God.

SECT. II.

The Practice of Our Church in Bodily Worship.

LET us in the next place compare our own Practice with this Representation, and see how we perform this part of visible Worship in our Church.

I. First then, when we come into the Publick Assemblies, we believe our selves to come into Christ's presence; because he has promised, *Mat. 18.21. Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them:* And therefore in Obedience to the Commands of God in Scripture; 'Tis our Custom to lift up our Hearts to Him
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in Prayer, and bow our Bodies before Him; This bowing our Bodies when we come into the Assembly of Christians met together in Christ's Name, and for his Service, tho' it be not enjoined by any Constitution of our Church, is generally practis'd by good People, as very decent in it self, and edifying to others. Our bowing our Bodies therefore at our coming into a Christian Assembly for Worship, is only to pay that *Bodily Worship* to God that He requires from us when we come into his peculiar presence, which presence He has promised in such Assemblies. Some indeed are so weak as to term our thus *worshipping* God, a *bowing to the Altar*: whereas our Church expressly declaring against any *Adoration* to be paid to the Consecrated *Bread and Wine*, does much more declare against doing it to the *Altar*.

II. *Uncovering the Head* is a Mark of Respect amongst us; and therefore we continue Uncovered whilst the Assembly lasts; that is, whilst we are in Christ's presence. The Custom of the Eastern Church was to *Uncover their Feet* in the presence of God; so *Moses* and *Joshua* were commanded to do; (to which *Solomon* alludes, *Eccles.* 5. 1.) This was easily practised with them, because they wore nothing on their Feet but *loose Shoes* and *Sandals*, which were readily slipped off; And this continued till our Saviour's time, as appears

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pears by their washing their Feet when they came into Houses, *Luke. 7. 44.* *Uncovering the Head* is the same common mark of respect with us now as *uncovering the Feet* was with them in their time; and this *uncovering the Feet* being neither practicable with us, nor any note of respect among us, but rather the contrary, Our Church has requir'd us instead of it, to *uncover our Heads*, *Can. 7.*

For the Justification of this practice, give me leave to digress so far as to explain one passage in the New Testament, which seems to require that a Man should have his *Head uncovered* in the presence of God, not as a note of respect, but of Priviledge. *1 Cor. 11. 7.* *For a Man indeed ought not to cover his Head, forasmuch as he is the Image and Glory of God; but the Woman is the Glory of the Man.* Which passage does not primarily relate to the covering the *Head*, but the *Face*, by a Veil; according to the Custom of the *Eastern Countries*: and this *covering the Face*, was a note of respect, as the contrary was a Note of Priviledge: So we find that when *Rebecca* was to appear before her Husband (*Gen. 24. 65.*) *She took a Veil and covered her self.* So (*Exod. 3. 6.*) *Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God;* and *Elijah wrapped his face in his Mantle when he went out to meet God,* *1 Kings 19. 13.* On the same Account the *Seraphims cover their faces with their Wings*, *Is.*

6. 2. 'Tis therefore a peculiar Priviledge and favour to be allowed to appear before God *uncover'd*, and it is reckon'd as such, 2. Cor. 2. 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, &c.* Those that were out of favour might not appear bare-faced before their Prince, but with their *Heads covered*, as Haman was when the King signified his displeasure against him, *Esther* 7. 8. Now for the understanding of the before cited place, we must consider that *Man* being the *Image and Glory of God*, is allowed to take this Confidence before God, which is denied to *Women*: For since God was pleased to make *Man* his *Image and Glory*, it is not fit that this his glory should be *covered* before Him: but on the other hand, it is fit that *Man's* glory, which is *Woman*, should be *covered* before God. This I conceive is the full meaning of this place, and has no relation to the manner of *uncovering the Head* in use with us now; which is only a mark of civil respect, and that peculiar to Men, and not to Women. But however, being an honour paid to *Men*, there is no reason why it should not be paid to *God*: On the contrary it seems to be required by the Apostle's general Injunction, *Let all things be done decently.* And it is one of the Articles of our Church, *That the Church has power to order Rites and Ceremonies*; that is, to determine what particular things come under

SECT. 2. How Practised by our Church. 117

der the Apostle's general word of *Decency*.

3. We stand up at our *Praises, Thanksgivings, and Confessions of Faith*, in Conformity to the Examples of Holy Scripture.

4. At our Confessions of Sin, and at our Prayers, we present our selves before God on our knees, by order of our Church, according to the Example of our Saviour, and the Church of God.

III. We Celebrate the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ in a *Worshipping* posture. I know that many except against this. It would engage me in a longer discourse to examine it fully; perhaps God may hereafter give me an Opportunity to discuss it at large, at present I shall only hint at the Scripture-Ground we have for it, and that by the followig deduction.

1. The *Altar* was of Old the *Lord's Table*, from whence his Attendants were fed, *Mal. 1. 7.* *Ye offer polluted Bread upon mine Altar, and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The Table of the Lord is contemptible.*

The Author's Intention is not to assert, That the Scriptures require *Kneeling* at the *Lord's Supper*, but to shew, That it is not contrary to the *Institution* of Christ, or *Practice* of the Apostles, who

compare our receiving it with the *Jews partaking of their Altar*, to which they approached with *Adoration*.

2. On this account the *Israelites* came to the *Altar*, and worshipped before it, as being *God's Table*, on which the Sacrifice was presented as his Meat, of which they were permitted to partake: So 2 Chron. 6. 12. *And he stood before the Altar of the Lord—vers. 13. And kneeled down on his knees: And 1 Kings 8. 54. He arose from before the Altar from kneeling on his knees,* Nor can it be said, That this kneeling of *Solomon* was only because he offered up a Prayer at that time, and that therefore he was in a praying posture; for undoubtedly it was the Duty of all that were present at any Sacrifice, to offer up Prayers to God with the Sacrifice: And accordingly we find it commanded 2 Kings 1. 22. *Ye shall worship before this Altar in Jerusalem; literally; Ye shall bow down your selves.*

3. The *Communion-Table* is called the *Lord's Table*, 1 Cor. 10. 21.

4. The *Israelites* partaking of the *Altar* is proposed as an Example for our partaking of the *Lord's Table*, 1 Cor. 10. 16. *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ;—vers. 18. Behold Israel after the Flesh: Are not they which eat of the Sacrifices partakers of the Altar?*

5. In allusion to this Religious Eating with Bodily Worship, it is Prophetied of our Saviour,

our,

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our, *Psal. 22. 29. All they that be set upon Earth* (that is, the favoured and happy Ser-
vants of God here; called in *vers. 26. The Meek*) *shall Eat and Worship.*

Since then the Scripture sets forth to us a Religious Eating at the *Lord's Table* with *Worship*, and the *Holy Communion* is such an Eating at his *Table*, it follows that the Scripture Warrants our *Worshipping* when we Eat.

2. We are Commanded in Scripture to receive the Holy Eucharist *In remembrance of Christ's Death, and by it we shew his Death till he come.* The same Scriptures Command us to Worship our Saviour; *For he is the Lord, and Worship thou him, Psal. 45. 11.* If ever then we are to Worship our Saviour, it is certainly when we come to him in the nearest Approaches that we are capable of in this World, and with the highest sense of Gratitude that our Souls can admit of; to remember and adore him for the greatest Act of Love that could be extended towards us, even laying down his Life for us, and partake of the Benefits thereof by feeding on him. If it be not our Duty to Worship him with our Bodies, as well as our Minds, on this occasion, it is hard to say when we are obliged to do it.

This Consideration prevail'd with the Protestant Church of *Poland*, to oblige all their Members to receive *kneeling* or *standing*,

in Opposition to the *Socinians*, who refused to pay any Worship to our Saviour; and therefore Celebrated his Supper sitting. The Words of their general *Synod* are these, (*Corpus Confession. p. 236.*) *Quod attinet ad Ceremonias, &c.* “As to the Ceremonies of the Lord’s-Supper, the Degree sometime ago discuss’d in the *Synod* of *Sandomir*, and the Conclusion made and repeated in the general *Synod* of *Cracow* and *Petrokow*, is also approved in that Session of the *Synod* of *Uladyslaw*, viz. This sitting at the Lord’s-Table shall not be used in any of the Churches of *Poland* or *Lithuania*, &c. of our Communion: For this Ceremony (tho’ indifferent as others are) is not used by the Christian and Reformed Churches; and is proper to the Infidel *Arians* only, who place themselves in an equal Throne with the Lord. Since then *sitting* has crept into some of our Churches, chiefly by the occasion and countenance of those who have miserably fallen from us, and denyed the Lord that bought us, We intreat and exhort all those Congregations, and our Brethren in the Lord, that they would change *sitting* into the Ceremonies used by us Protestants in all the Reformed Churches of *Europe*, even that the Lord’s-Supper may be administered to the Communicants standing or kneeling

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“ kneeling (with a Protestation against
“ *Bread-Worship* used by the Papiſts) both
“ which Rites (as they have been hitherto
“ used in ſome Churches) we leave free,
“ and approve; without blaming or giving
“ Offence to thoſe who uſe either. This
Synod was held *June* the 15th. 1583.

The Synod of *Petrokow*, above-mention'd
(held *June* 1, 2, 3. 1578. *pa.* 234.) expreſſes
it ſelf in theſe Words; “ Becauſe thoſe
“ Traiterous Fugitives from us to *Arianism*,
“ who change all things in the Church, pre-
“ tending to imitate Chriſt without Diſcre-
“ tion, were the firſt Authors amongſt us of
“ *Sitting at the Lord's Table*; contrary to the
“ Rites uſed in all the Reformed Churches
“ throughout *Europe*. Therefore we reject
“ this Ceremony, as proper to them who
“ treat as well Chriſt as his Sacraments irre-
“ verently, as indecent and Irreligious, and
“ very offensive to well-meaning People.

It ought to be obſerved, That this Church
reckons *Sitting* a Ceremony; and a Ceremony
of an ill Signification and Original, and
not uſed by any Proteſtant Church in their
Time.

IV. But I find moſt People acknowledge
the Reaſonableneſs of this; and grant, if it
were left to us how we would *Receive*, that we
ought to do it with Adoration: But, ſay they,
Obedience is better than Sacrifice; we are com-
manded

manded to do what Christ did, and he instituted, and his Disciples received it, in a Table posture; and therefore so ought we notwithstanding the Scriptures, Reason, and Decency, seem to recommend another Posture to us.

Now to this Argument, which is the only one I find brought from Scripture, and which seems to prevail with most, I Answer,

1. That we are not required, nor is it convenient to imitate all that Christ did. Neither the Time, nor the Number of Receivers, nor the Posture, being Obligatory to us; as appears from *St. Paul*, 1 Cor. 11. 23. who having occasion to mention *what he received of the Lord*, concerning this Sacrament, mentions only our Saviour's *taking Bread, giving Thanks, and Breaking it*; and then saying, *Take, Eat; this is my Body, &c.* without the Circumstances of the Number of Receivers, his Posture, or being at Supper. Nay, that we may not think that this had any relation to a Common Supper, or the Circumstances of it, he observes, that *Supper was done, when he took the Cup*. Our Saviour's Posture therefore, whatever it was, is no wise Obligatory to us, it not being any part of what *St. Paul* professes to have received from Christ concerning this Sacrament.

2. I have already proved, that Religious Eating was accompanied with *Bodily Worship*; and

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and therefore if it were granted, that we were obliged to receive this Sacrament in a Table-Posture, from the Example of our Saviour; yet it would not follow, that we should not receive it Kneeling. 'Tis certain our Saviour did not *Sit*, but *Lie* at Table, when he did eat his usual Meals. Suppose then he had obliged us to his Posture of Eating, we ought to Lie, as he did; but none assert the Necessity of our doing so, or Practise this way. Since then all Parties change it, sure we do better, that change it into the Religious way of Eating, recommended to us in the Scriptures, with Adoration, than others, that change our Saviour's way into Sitting, the Common way of our Eating.

3. We have this further to say for our Practice, That our Saviour was not at a Common Supper when he instituted this Sacrament, but at the Passeeover; which was a Sacramental Eating and had a peculiar posture prescribed for it, *Exod* 12. 11. And though some think (but without Warrant from Scripture) that the *Jews* did not observe this, yet it is owned they observed another, which differed from the Common Posture of Eating, and was reckoned Religious. However, 'tis spoken, that our Saviour performed this Eating with several Religious Ceremonies that were not in the first Institution:

Institution: Such is that we find, *Luke 22. 17. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among your selves.* This Cup is different from the Sacramental Cup, which is instituted, *ver. 20.* And therefore if we would imitate Christ, we ought to eat the *Lord's-Supper* in a way peculiar to it self, and different from our Common Meals.

4. But Fourthly, The full Answer to the Argument, is, That it goes on a false Supposition, That our Saviour instituted this Sacrament in the Common Posture of Eating. Which no wise appears in Scripture; neither can it be inferred from any thing said or intimated by the Evangelists, or *St. Paul*, but rather the contrary. It's true, whilst the Disciples were Eating, *he took Bread*; but after that, *he gave Thanks, and blessed it*; and then *he brake it, and gave it to them*: And it is not to be supposed that the Disciples continued Eating, whilst our Saviour was giving Thanks, and Blessing; that is, Praying. Our Saviour therefore, or his Disciples, were not Eating, but giving Thanks, and Praying, whilst this Sacrament was instituted; and therefore it was proper to be done (and, in probability, was done by our Saviour) in a Thanksgiving and Praying Posture. Neither was there any necessity to take notice of this Change of Posture; since the Change of the Action, from *Eating*, to *Thanksgiving* and
Blessing,

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Blessing, sufficiently signifies and infers it. There is no notice taken of our Saviour's Rising at all from the Tables by any of the three *Evangelists* that deliver to us the *Institution* of the Sacraments; and yet it is plain, from *John* 13. 4. that he did Rise from that Supper, and *washed his Disciples Feet*, and *sat down again*, ver. 12. and so he might Rise to Bless and Distribute the Holy Sacrament: And therefore we have no Assurance from Scripture, that our Saviour *instituted this Sacrament in a Common Table-posture*, rather the *Contrary* seems probable. So that He has left us at liberty to follow the general Rules of Decency and Reason, and what the *Scriptures* represent to us a fit, and practised in the like Cases.

Lastly, We find the *Apostle* severely re-proving the *Corinthians*, for their Irreverence in *Receiving this Sacrament*; and threatening them with *Damnation*, for not *discerning the Lord's Body*; that is, for Receiving it as their *Common Food*, without distinguishing between them by a Reverend and Religious Receiving it. And sure it is but a due *Distinction* between *It* and our *Common Food*, to approach the *Lord's-Table* with as much Reverence as the Jews did their *Altar*, at which they never sat down.

Upon the whole, I think we do nothing in this, or any other Sacred Action, as to
Bodily

Bodily Worship, but what is Warranted and Grounded on the *Holy Scriptures*; and particularly as to what we do at the *Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, it is as unjust to suspect or accuse us of Worshipping the *Lord's Table*, or the Elements of *Bread and Wine*, because we receive them Kneeling, as it were to accuse the Jews of Worshipping their *Altar* or *Sacrifices*, because they Worshipped before them, as God Commanded them to do, 2 *Kings*. 18. 22. I beseech God to give us true *Submission* and *Humility of Heart*; for the Outward Expressions of these Inward *Dispositions of Mind* which our Church has appointed by *Bodily Worship*, are certainly such as God has approved, and holy Men have practised in Scripture.

S E C T. III.

The Practice of the Dissenters in Bodily Worship.

I. **A**ND now I come to you my Friends who dissent from Us, to consider how You perform *This part of God's Worship*, and to compare Your Principles and Practises with what I have represented from the *Holy Scriptures*.

And, First, As to Your Principles. I need not tell you, That you do not allow *Bodily Adoration*

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ration to be any part of God's Worship : Which you cannot but discern to be plainly contrary to the Holy Scriptures, that make it the most proper peculiar Act thereof, as I have shewed before, Chap. IV. Sect. 1. No. 1, 2, 3. In your Confession of Faith, Chap. 21. Prayer, Reading Scriptures, &c. Singing Psalms, Administation of the Sacraments, are reckon'd up as Parts of Religious Worship, but not a Word concerning the Worship of the Body. Your Directory doth not only leave it out, but excludes it, by requiring all to enter the Assembly, and to take their Seats and Places, without Adoration, or bowing themselves towards one Place or other; that is, without Bowing themselves at all. A Rule directly opposite to Natural Reason, as well as to the Commands of God, and to the Examples of his Saints: And 'tis unconceivable how it should be laid down by a Society of Men that professed to believe Christ peculiarly present in their Assemblies; which yet the Authors of your Directory profess to do, in that very place where they forbid all Adoration. Let us then, I pray you, compare their Rule with God's Word: You have the Bible in your hands, and you look upon it to be your Privilege to use it: The Scriptures say, O come, let us worship, let us bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Your Directory says, Let us enter the Assembly without

without Adoration or Bowing. Where notwithstanding, it allows, that we in a *special manner appear in God's Presence.* Surely you cannot but see, this is not only to lay aside, but to contradict the Rules of *Scripture.*

II. Your *Practice* is conformable to your *Principles,* For,

1. At your *Thanksgivings* or *Praises,* you neither Bow, nor Stand up.

2. Whereas We, and the Churches of God, in all Ages, have used to Stand up at the Solemn Confessions of Faith, you have cast out of your Religious Assemblies, not only *this Act of Worship,* but the *Confessions of Faith themselves*; so material a Part of the Service of God, as appears from *Rom. 10. 9. 10.* *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved: For with the Heart Man believes unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.* To profess solemnly that we expect no Happiness but from the good Pleasure of God, and that we freely acquiesce in his Provisions for us, is no small Evidence of the Submission of our Minds to God; and, upon that Account, may be reckoned an Instance of External Worship, and accordingly many of the *Psalms* contain such Confessions.

3. You Sit, generally, at your Publick Prayers.

4. At

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4. At the Holy Sacrament you Sit, not only whilst you Receive, but likewise at the Thansgiving and Blessing before: And your *Directory* imposes this Posture on Communicants, though contrary to *Holy Scripture*, in respect of that Part that concerns the Prayer and Thansgiving; and without any *Command*, or so much as *Example* from Scripture, in respect of the Sitting at the time of Receiving.

5. Too many of your Perswasion condemn us, who conform to God's Word, in these Particulars, as guilty of *Superstition*; and endeavour to render our Conformity ridiculous; not being content to lay aside the *Commands of God* themselves, but endeavouring likewise to *condemn* and *scoff* at the Observation of them in *Us*.

In short, I entreat you to consider, That you have *not any one Visible Act of Adoration amongst you in your Assemblies*, except we reckon in this Number, That your Men *Uncover their Heads* at Prayer; and yet even this is not required by your *Directory*.

III. And now let me a while Examine calmly with you, the Pretences I have met with, for laying aside this Part of *God's Worship*; for it is not probable that any would banish *Adoration* out of their Assemblies, and alledge no Reason for their doing so.

K

I. First

1. First therefore, I find that Place of Scripture produced to this purpose, *Joh. 4. 24.* *God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* Some think that all *Bodily Worship* is here forbidden, and that only the *Worship* of the *Spirit* or *Mind* is required of us under the *Gospel*. Upon this, some have declared against all *Churches*, or separate Places for *Worship*; Others, against all *Bodily Worship*; Others, against all *Sacraments*; Others, against all *Vocal Prayers*, *Praises* and *Thanksgivings*: And even in the *Apostle's* time, some were against all *Visible Assemblies*. And indeed, if we understand this Place as some do, That all *Bodily Worship* is excluded by it, and that it is sufficient to *Worship God* in our *Spirits* or *Minds* only, I do not see but all these are in the right; and those who pretend to be above *Ordinances*, and *worship God no-where*, are most conformable to this Rule; and, next to them, the *silent Meetings* of the *Quakers*, without *Sacraments*, without *Vocal Prayers* or *Praises*, are the most *Spiritual Service*. For if other *Dissenters* think *Bodily Worship*, such as *Bowing*, *Kneeling*, &c. unlawful or unnecessary, because they are *Acts* of the *Body*, and unfit, on that account, to be offered to *God*, who is a *Spirit*; why may not the *Quakers* omit the *Sacraments*, and the *Words of the Mouth*, which are *Outward Things* as well as the other? Nay, why should not
Outward

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Outward Teaching or Preaching cease? since the *Spirit* is a sufficient Teacher, and has promised us, *Heb. 8. 10. I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts.*—
Ver. 11. *And they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, &c.* The Principle and Reasoning is the same in all these, and will justify the *Silent Meetings* of the *Quakers*; nay, the Extravagance of *Those* that pretend to be above all Ordinances, as well as the Irreverence of other Dissenters.

But we ought to interpret Scripture so as one place may not contradict another; and since the *Holy Scriptures* shew us, that God requires our *Vocal Prayers and Praises, our Visible Sacraments and Adoration*, we ought not to interpret *Worshipping in the Spirit* so as to exclude these, but rather conclude that they may be offered up to God in such a manner as to become proper for *Spiritual Worship*, or God would never have required them.

When therefore our Saviour represents the *Worship* He taught the *World*, as a *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, his meaning doubtless is not to exempt us from *worshipping his Father* with our *Bodies*, whereof He Himself has given us an Example; but to teach us, That the *Outward Acts of Worship* that we pay to God, are only Acceptable to Him, when they proceed from, and are accompanied with a hearty *submission of our Souls*; and that every Act

is more or less Acceptable, as it has more or less of our Hearts and Affections in it: But that Circumstances of Place, and the like, give us no Advantage, and are of no value towards making our *Worship* Acceptable.

This meaning of the Words directly answers our *Saviour's* design, which was to shew the *Samaritan* Woman that the time was coming, that the *Worship* offered to *God* under the *Gospel* would be nothing more acceptable for being offered at *Jerusalem*, or *Mount Gerizim*, or any other place: But the Heart being right, all Places were alike. Which was directly contrary to the *Jewish Law*; that allowed no *Sacrifice* or *Oblation* to be acceptable to *God*, that was not offered at the *Temple*, and consequently their *Worship* derived its acceptance from the Place, and not from the Heart alone of him that offered it.

We affirm therefore, as our *Saviour* has here taught us, that it is only from the *Heart*, or *Spirit*, that our *Worship* becomes acceptable to *God*, and that the time or place where it is offered contributes nothing to our acceptance: But that in whatever place, at whatever time, in whatsoever posture we offer up our *Spirits* and *Hearts* to *God*, we are accepted by him.

But then we say likewise, a Man who neglects the Assemblies of Christians, cannot have

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have a good *Heart* towards *God*, because he breaks his *Command*; that such as do not take care to provide a convenient and decent place, and set it apart for *Christians* to meet, and to perform *God's Worship* in, cannot have a value for it; that such as neglect the *Holy Sacraments*, want *Faith* in His *Promises*, as well as *Obedience* to His *Commands*; and that those who neglect to *Worship* him with their *Body*, and to pay outward *Reverence* and *Adoration* when they come into his presence, must want inward submission of their *Minds*, because they do not approach as he requires. If a Man truly *Worship* *God* in his *Spirit*, it will oblige him, if able, to perform these outward *Acts*; and if he be not able, *God*, doth not require them.

It is in this, as in *Faith*, *Jam. 2. 18.* *A Man may say, Thou hast Faith, and I have Works: Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will shew thee my Faith by my Works.* After the same manner a Man may say, Thou *Worshippest* *God* inwardly in *Heart* and *Spirit*, and I *Worship* him outwardly, and in the face of the *Church* with my *Body*. Shew me thy inward *Worship* without *bowing*, *kneeling*, or other *Bodily Act of Worship*, and I will shew thee my inward *Worship*, and dread of *God's Majesty* by the *Worship* of my *Body*.

From all which it is manifest, that our *Obligation* to *worship* *God* in *Spirit* and *Truth*,

doth no more exclude *Bodily Worship*, than *Faith* does exclude *Works*.

2. The second Pretence I have heard for banishing of *Bodily Adoration* is much like the first. It is alledged, *That God has no value for it; and that if our Hearts are humble and right with God, no matter whether we signifie it by outward Acts of Adoration or no.*

But to this I answer,

1. That *God* himself is the best Judge of what befits his Majesty, and 'tis a sure sign that he valueth a thing when he requires it; since therefore he has Commanded us to render him this *Bodily Worship*; for us to alledge, *That He doth not value it*, is too like setting up our own Wisdom above His.

2. The Words of our *Prayers*, or *Praises*, and all the *Fruits of our Lips*, are outward things, as well as the gestures of our *Bodies*, and *God* values them as little as our prostrating our *Bodies* before him, when the *Heart* goes not along with them, as appears from *Is. 1.* where he shews his *Abhorrence*, not only of *Sacrifices*, *Feasts* and *spreading forth Hands*, but likewise of *Prayers*, *vers. 4.* And *Mark 7. 6.* *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me, howbeit in vain do they Worship me, &c.* Yet to throw *Vocal Prayers* and *Praises* out of the service of *God*, were absolutely to destroy His *Visible Worship*; and after the same manner to throw out all
Outward

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Outward Signs of Reverence, such as *kneeling*, &c. is a fair Step to it. For the same God that has sworn, *That every Tongue shall confess unto him*, has likewise sworn, *That every knee shall bow unto him*, Rom. 14. 11. Both therefore are alike required in the *Worship* of God, and both alike insignificant when separated from the sincere concurrence of our *Hearts*. When the Meditations of our *Hearts* go along with the Words of our Mouths, they are acceptable to God; and when the submission of our Souls goes along with the *Worship* of our *Bodies*, it is grateful to him, and valuable in his sight, as all other Acts of Obedience are.

3. Tho' *Bodily Worship* in it self were a small thing, yet the omission of it may be a great and crying Sin, and a great Contempt of *Almighty God*. Thus eating the *forbidden Fruit* was in it self a very inconsiderable *Outward Action*, and yet being *forbidden*, it was the Ruine of all *Mankind*. Thus the washing a Man with Water, *In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, is in it self no great matter, yet the *willful omission* of it is acknowledged by *most* to be *damnable*. Thus *kneeling*, or *standing* at our *Prayers*, is but a *Circumstance*, yet since God has required it, and *Holy Men* recommended it by their Example, to omit it wilfully may be a great sin, and render our best meant *Prayers* ineffectual. Much more must it be sinful to condemn, or

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mock at those who practice it according to God's Institution.

4. As small a value as you think God has for Outward performances, yet it is plain, that you lay great weight upon the doing, or not doing of them. In cases of necessity we think they may be lawfully omitted; but you are Taught that in no cases they may be lawfully practised. You are Taught rather to stay at Home, and not to *Worship God* at all *Publickly*, than to conform in Outward Gestures, or Circumstances. You are advised rather to abstain all your Lives from the *Lord's-Supper* than receive it *Kneeling*. Now if you think God does hate them so much, upon supposition, that he has not required them, and accounts them a polluting of his Ordinance; How must it displease him to omit them, if it appears that He has Com-manded them, as I think I have made sufficiently plain?

5. I intreat you, my Friends, to consider, That whatever *Bodily Worship* be in it self, yet to throw it out of Our *Publick Assemblies* is of fatal consequence, since it doth in a great measure defeat the design of them. The great design of *Publick Worship* is, First, To signify, and Testifie to the *World*, the Sense and Belief we have of the *Being, Power and Providence* of God, To declare his Name to our Brethren, and in the midst of the Church to sing Praises unto him,

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him, *Heb. 2. 12.* And Secondly to be a means to beget, stir up, and preserve this sense and belief in one another, *Heb. 10. 25.* To both these ends, *Bodily and External Worship* do very much contribute; and 'tis hardly possible to attain either of them without it. For we cannot see into one anothers *Hearts*, and therefore we must signify our sense and belief of God in the *Publick Assemblies*, either by *Words or Actions*, and if possible, by such as are peculiarly appointed by God to this purpose. But in your *Meetings* there is no Obligation on any one to signify his Concurrence with the Congregation in any Ordinary Act of *Worship*, either by Word or Gesture, and therefore this end of *Publick Assemblies* is utterly defeated by you. Your *Directory* does not require, or allow the People so much as to signify their assent by adding an *Amen* to the *Prayers or Thanksgivings* there offered: But on the contrary, you ridicule those that practise in pursuant to the Directions and Examples in Scripture. And as to Gestures, such as *kneeling, standing, or bowing the Body, &c.* you condemn them all as Relicks of *Idolatry, or Superstition*. There remains therefore in your *Assemblies* nothing whereby the People may testify their Belief, or assent to what they hear, which was one design of the *Meeting*. Thus by turning all *Bodily Worship* out of your *Assemblies*, you have made void this

this great end of them, and lest no visible distinction whereby any one may signifie whether he assents to the *Worship* that is offered, or dissents from it. The whole *Assembly* being to one another meer *Spectators* and *Hearers*, not *Joint-Worshippers*.

As to the other end of *Publick Worship*, which is to keep alive, and stir up our Affections; you cannot but own that the omission of this outward *Worship* is a great hindrance to it. For it must needs be a great check to *Devotion* to see a Man come into the presence of God in a *Christian Assembly*, with less Reverence, or shew of respect, than into the presence of an Ordinary Superior; and behave himself less civilly there, than he would do in a *Court of Justice*. And let People pretend what they will, That can never be suitable *Worship* to God, which would be rudeness to a *Judge*. And therefore the *Quakers* act much more reasonably, who refuse to take off their *Hats*, or pay *Bodily Worship* to *Men*, than other *Dissenters*, who pay it to *Men*, and refuse it to God. For to do so, must naturally tend to distinguish the awe and sense we ought to have of His Majesty, and the belief of his peculiar presence in our *Assemblies*, and it is much to be feared, that this proceeds too often from the want of such awe.

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6. To conclude, There is a Language of Gestures rather more significant and moving than that of the Tongue; and he must have a peculiar make of Mind, that is not more awakened and affected by seeing a *whole Congregation on their Knees*, with their *Hands and Eyes lift up to Heaven*; than to see them sitting or leaning, whilst their Petitions are offering up to God. Words therefore and Gestures being only different parts of the Language whereby we express and communicate our *Thoughts and Affections to one another*, and Both being recommended to us by *Nature*, and Commanded by *Scripture*, to be used in the *Worship of God*, he who lays aside *Gestures*, does sin against the *Commandment of God*, as well as he that lays aside *Words*. I heartily wish *You*, and all *Dissenters*, wou'd consider this: Which if *you did*, I assure my self *you would perceive this to be a Matter of some moment*; and neither condemn our *Bodily Adoration*, nor continue your own (what I must call) *Irreverence*.

3. But, Thirdly, Some alledge, for their omitting this Part of *God's Worship*, *That they do not condemn Bodily Adoration in his Service*; but that to *Stand up and Kneel in the Congregation*, is so troublesome to them, that they judge they are better omitted.

To which I Answer, That I verily believe that these Persons do give the true Reason
of

of this Practice. For, as it has been shewn before, 'twas of old the Reason of People's Neglecting *God's Service*, and Matter of their Complaint against it, That *it was a weariness*, Mal. 1. 13. But sure, 'tis no less a Sin, to lay aside the *Commandments of God* for our *Ease*, than to change them for the *Traditions of Men*. 'Tis an Effect of our Natural Corruption, to desire to serve God with that which *costs us nothing*, and without trouble; and most are willing to save their *Pains*, as well as their *Money*, in his Service. But this is a certain sign that they have little Heart and Affection to it: If they had, it would not seem a trouble to them to shew it, by all the *Outward Demonstrations* that the Scriptures recommend to us. A *devout Heart* bows the *Body*, bends the *Knees*, and lifts up the *Hands* in *Prayer*, without any trouble. And they have reason to suspect their *own Hearts*, that find these Demonstrations of Reverence to their *Creator and Redeemer*, Uneasie to them.

This very Pretence ought to shew you, That it is the Negligence and Dead heartedness of *People* towards *God's Service*, that has banished these *Bodily Adorations* out of it. We think it no Disadvantage to our Church, that we are forc'd to acknowledge, That *your Way of Worship is much Easier than ours*, to such as are present at it; it being much less trouble

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to a Man that has no Value for Religion, to come into an Assembly, and there sit down, and lap his Cloak about him, without being obliged to any Word or Gesture that may disturb his Sleep, or Worldly Thoughts, than to be under an Obligation every moment to signify his Attention by some Word or Gesture, under the Penalty of being remarked by the whole Congregation for his Negligence and Irreverence; which is the case in our Assemblies; and, 'tis to be feared, is the Reason that some leave us, and go where they may be at Ease and Negligent more securely.

4. I confess in the Fourth place, There are some that excuse themselves more handsomely, for not Kneeling at their Prayers, &c. Say they, *We want Conveniency, we have no room to Kneel.*

To these we Answer, That where such a thing is omitted out of Necessity, not Negligence or Contempt, we believe God will not impute it to them, neither do we accuse them for it.

But then we cannot but observe, that this is not the general Reason of Omitting this Part of God's Worship among you. For.

1. First, It is not your Custom to Kneel in your Publick Worship, though you have Conveniency, as is manifest from the Practice in all your Meetings; in which I could
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never learn that any one Kneeled: on the contrary you condemn Us who do!

2. When you want *Conveniency* for *Kneeling*, you might *Stand* at your Prayers; which is a *Scripture-Posture* as well as *Kneeling*. You might *bow your Bodies* when you come into God's Presence; you might continue *Uncovered* whil't in it: but you omit *all these*, as well as *Kneeling*; and thereby plainly shew, that your Neglect in this Point, is an effect of *Choice*, not *Necessity*.

3. If *Kneeling* at *Publick Prayers* be a Duty, we are obliged to provide *Conveniency* for it; for it is certainly a Sin, to suffer any Part of *God's Service* to be omitted, for want of *Care*. It is as easie to provide *Conveniency* for *Kneeling*, as for *Sitting*, in *Publick Assemblies*: And if we consider how *Careful* most People are to provide Seats for their *Ease*, and how *Negligent* to make any Provision for *Kneeling*; 'Tis but too manifest a Sign (whatever is pretended) that they are much more zealous for their *Ease*, than for the *Service of God*.

But what *Conveniency* is it that Men desire? It is easie for them to have as much *Conveniency* as *St. Paul* and his Congregation had, when they *kneeled* on the *Shore*, *Act. 20*. If they had the *Devotion* of *Saint Paul*, they would not fail to imitate his Example: *Be ye followers (saith he) of me, as I*

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am of Christ. St. Paul followed the Example of *Christ* in this particular; and surely we ought to follow his, except we think our selves grown *Wiser* than he was, or prefer our *Ease* to our *Duty*.

But the Truth of the Matter, as it seems to me, is, That your neglecting to Kneel at the *most solemn* of all Christian Ordinances, the *Lord's-Supper*, does harden you against *Reverence* in the other Parts of *Divine Worship*. And it is no wonder it shou'd do so; for if *Reverence* be not thought Necessary in that *Duty*, it may well seem Unnecessary in any other.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

Of the Lord's Supper.

S E C T. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning the Frequency of Celebrating it.

I. THE *Fifth* Main and Substantial Part of the ordinary Worship of God; in the Assemblies of Christians, is, the Celebration of the Lord's-Supper. It is not to be expected that I should treat concerning the Preparation requisite in the Receivers, or any of those other Circumstances which are generally agreed on as necessary in this Matter, and concerning which so many excellent Treatises are extant. I shall confine my self to one Point, and that is the Frequency of it, as a Publick Act of Worship; and Examine, First, What the Institution and Practice of the Church of God, in Scripture, teach us, as to this Particular. Secondly, Compare our Practice therewith. And, Thirdly, The Practice of those who differ from us.

As to the Frequency of Celebrating the Lord's-Supper, I find many People of Opinion, That the Scriptures have determined nothing in it; and

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and that therefore it is intirely left to the Discretion of the *Ministers*, how often they will Celebrate it, and to the People's, how often they will receive it: And that on this Account, every one is left to judge for himself, when he will be a Partaker of it, as he thinks it most for his *Comfort* and *Edification*; which makes the *Celebration* and *Receiving* it so *Arbitrary* a thing, that many never receive it at all. And the Universal Neglect of it is become one of the *Crying Sins* of these *Kingdoms*, and a great Objection against the *Reformation*.

But if we consider the *Institution* of this *Sacrament*, it will help us to pass a right Judgment, as to the *Obligation* of the *Frequency* that lies on us. I shall endeavour to make this plain in the following Particulars.

1. Our Saviour, when he had blessed, broken, and delivered the Bread to his Disciples, Commanded them to *Take, Eat, and Do This*, that they saw Him do, in Remembrance of him: And when he had Blessed the Cup, and given it to them, he Commanded them to *Drink all of it*; and as often as they Drink it, to do it in Remembrance of him, 1 Cor. 11. 26. Now I conceive the most Natural Interpretation of these Words of our Saviour, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, and *This do Ye as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of Me*, to be,

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be, as if he had said, "We have now Celebrated together the *Jewish Passover* in Remembrance of our Fore-fathers deliverance out of *Egypt*. But I am about to purchase for you by my Death a much more glorious deliverance from the slavery of *Sin*, and the power of *Hell*. And I order you for the future to do this (which you see done by Me) in Remembrance of Me, as what you have hitherto done, has been in Remembrance of your Deliverance out of *Egypt*. From this *Institution* it appears,

1. That the *Lord's-Supper* is substituted in the place of the *Passover*, which was Commanded by the *Law* to be Celebrated once in the Year; and that in a place appointed by God, where all *Israel* were to assemble for it,

2. That Our *Saviour* has confin'd us to no Place, or prefixt time for the Celebration of his *Supper* that succeeds it; which makes it much more easie for us to observe it, and renders us much more inexcusable if we neglect it.

3. Since Our *Saviour* has taken off the Confinement to Time and Place, that made the *Passover* such a Burthen. It follows that they who Celebrate it seldomer than the *Jews* did their *Passover*, must needs have less regard to the memory of *Christ's Death*, and the deliverance

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deliverance wrought by it, than the *Jews* had to their Deliverance out of *Egypt*: There being no other imaginable reason that can tempt them to neglect purifying themselves for this solemnity of *Worship*, and frequenting it, but the deadness of their *Hearts* towards *Christ*, and the want of *Sense*, *Gratitude* and *Love* towards their Master.

4. *Christ's* positive Command to *Do this in Remembrance of Him, &c.* must oblige us in *some* Times, and in *some* Circumstances: And there can be no better way of determining *when* we are obliged to do it, than by observing when *God* in his goodness give us Opportunity, for either we are then obliged to do it, or else we may choose whether we will ever do it or no; there being no better means of determining the frequency, than this of *God's* giving us the opportunity. And the same Rule holding in all other general positive Commands, such as in those that oblige us to *Charity*, we may be sure it holds likewise in this. Therefore whoever slights, or neglects any Opportunity of *Receiving*, which *God* affords him, does sin as certainly as he who being enabled by *God* to perform an Act of *Charity*, and invited by a fit Object, neglects to Relieve him, or shuts up his Bowels of Compassion against him concerning whom the Scripture assure us, That the Love of *God* dwells not in him: And the

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Argument is rather stronger against him who neglects this Holy Sacrament; for how can it be supposed that Man has a true love for his *Saviour*, or a due sense of his *sufferings*, who refuses, or neglects to remember the greatest of all Benefits, in the easiest manner, tho' Commanded to do it by his *Redeemer*, and invited by a fair opportunity of God's own offering.

5. It is manifest, that if it be not *our own Faults*, we may have an *Opportunity* every *Lord's-Day* when we meet together; And therefore that Church is guilty of laying aside this *Command*, whose *Order of Worship* doth not require and provide for this Practice. Christ's *Command* seems to lead us directly to it: For, *Do this in remembrance of Me*, implies, that Christ was to leave them; that they were to meet together after he was gone; and that he required them to remember him at their Meetings whilst he was absent. The very Design of our Publick Meetings on the *Lord's-day*, and not on the *Jewish Sabbath*, is to remember, and keep up in our Minds a sense of what Christ did and suffered for us, *till He come again*; and this we are obliged to do, not in such a manner as *our own Invention* suggests, but by such means as *Christ himself has prescribed to us*; that is, by celebrating this *Holy Sacrament*.

It seems then probable from the very *Institution*

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tution of this *Sacrament*, that our *Saviour* designed it should be a part of *God's Service*, in all the *solemn Assemblies* of *Christians*, as the *Passover* was in the *Yearly Assemblies* of the *Jews*. To know therefore *how often* *Christ* requires us to celebrate this *Feast*, we have no more to do, but to enquire *how often* *Christ* requires us to *Meet together*; that is, at least every *Lord's-day*.

II. And the same is farther manifest, in the second place, from the *Examples* of the *Apostles*, and of the *Churches of God* in the *New Testament*. They cannot be supposed but to have *understood* what *Christ* meant by these Words, *Do this in remembrance of Me*; and if it appears that they did make this *Feast* a *constant part* of their *Ordinary Worship*, we may safely conclude, That *Christ* meant it should be so. And here 'tis observable, That we do not find any *solemn stated Meeting* of *Christians* for *Worship* in the whole *New Testament* without it.

At first the *Disciples* had their *Meetings* every *Day*, and then they likewise daily received this *Sacrament*, *Acts 2. 46.* And they continued daily with one *Accord* in the *Temple*, and in *breaking Bread* from *House to House*: And *St. Paul* supposes that their *Meetings* together was on purpose, and with express *Design* to *Celebrate* this *Feast*, *1 Cor. 10. 20.* When ye come together therefore into one place,

this is not to eat the Lord's-Supper; which intimates, That one main Design of their coming together, was and ought to have been *to eat the Lord's Supper*; tho' by their misbehaviour they so corrupted the Ordinance; that it could not be called *His Supper*.

If one should now reprove Christians, whom they observe to mis-behave themselves in Church, in these Words: *When you come together into one place, That is not to hear the Word of God Preached to you; for one is Talking, and another is Sleeping*: Wou'd not every Body conclude, That in the Opinion of the Reprover, the *Hearing of the Word of God Preached* ought to be one End of their coming together? And then surely the Apostles saying, that *when you come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, &c.* gives us ground to conclude, that in his Opinion, *Eating the Lord's Supper* ought to be one constant End of our coming together. Which is further manifest from the Advice he gives them, *Verf. 33. Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.* One End therefore of their coming together, was, as Children come together in a Family at Meal-time, that is, to be fed at their Father's Table: For what the Apostle called in the former Verse, coming together *into one place*; in this Verse he calls, coming together *to eat*; intimating, that a main end of their
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their coming together into one place, was to eat.

3. When the Meeting of Christians came to be fixed to the *First day of the Week*, or the *Lord's-Day*, the *Breaking of Bread* was likewise brought to the same Day: So *Acts 20.7. And upon the first Day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them.* From which words we may conclude two things: First, That the First Day of the Week was the Disciples time of Publick Worship. Secondly, That the Breaking of Bread, or celebrating the Holy *Eucharist*, was a part of that Worship. The Scripture is as plain for the one as the other. There have been some Disputes raised about Changing the Day of Worship from the Last to the First Day of the Week, and this place is usually produced to justify the Change; and sure the same place is as clear for the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper* on that Day, as for the *Observation* of the *Day it self*, instead of the *Sabbath*. And therefore whoever wilfully passes the *Lord's-day* without it, doth not observe it as the Scriptures from the Practice of the Disciples, direct us to to do.

4. I have endeavoured all along to confine my self to the plain words of *Scripture*, and to use such Arguments only, as the meanest Persons might be able to judge of from their

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Bibles: Yet in a Controverted place of *Scripture* concerning the meaning of a Command of Christ, relating to some positive Duty, I take the constant practise of the Church from the Apostles downward, to be a good means of determining the sence of it: and as there is not any Example of a stated Assembly for Worship in the *New Testament* without the *Lord's Supper*, so I think there is not any Example of that Nature in all *Antiquity*. For the truth of which, I appeal to those that are skill'd in it. The nearer we come to the Apostles, we shall still find the *Lord's-Supper* the more punctually observed, as a constant part of the Ordinary Service of the Church: And 'tis remarkable, that when first some who had been present at the Prayers and Preaching of the Church began to go away from the *Publick Assemblies* without *Receiving* (which was a corruption that came in about 200 Years after Christ) it was looked on as so great an Innovation and breach of the *Scripture-Rule*, that the Church decreed who-soever was guilty of it should be Excommunicated. So, particularly the Ninth of those commonly called the *Canons of the Apostles*, and the second *Canon of the Council of Antioch*. Thus the Practice of the Church continued for many Ages. And tho' the generality of Men could not be perswaded constantly to partake of the *Lord's-Supper*, after the Discipline

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cipline of the Church was dissolved, and the Piety of Men began to cool, yet still it was Celebrated on the *Lord's-Day*, according to the first settled *Practice of the Church*.

5. And indeed the corrupt practice of the solitary Masses of the *Papists* is a further evidence of its being counted Originally a part of the ordinary Worship of God, I think it is confessed by all, even by the *Papists* themselves, that those Masses had their Original from the universal corruption and negligence of Christians; for whilst the People had either Piety or Zeal, they communicated with the Bishop, or Ministers, in every *Assembly*, at least a competent number of them: But when Piety and Devotion were in a manner lost in the corrupt Ages of the Church, it came to pass, that tho' the Minister Consecrated the Elements every *Lord's-day*, according to the Example of the *Holy Scriptures*, and *Antiquity*, yet he could prevail with few or none to receive with him, but was often forced to receive alone. This was a great Corruption and a falling from the *Scripture*-precedent; but the *Roman Church* instead of Reforming the Abuse, by obliging the People to receive as formerly, corrupted her Principles, as well as Practice, and decreed it lawful and sufficient for the *Priest* to receive alone. Yet this abuse shews us what should be, and what has been the *Practice*; and that the

the Church has constantly reckoned the *Lord's-Supper*, as an ordinary part of *Publick Worship* in *Christian Assemblies* on solemn Days; and sure then to lay it aside can be termed no less than an *Invention* of our own, since we can neither in *Scripture*, or in the Church of God for 1400 Years together, (which is a sufficient Commentary on the *Scripture Text*) produce one Example of a stated solemn Christian Assembly without it.

SECT. II.

The Practice of Our Church as to Frequent Communions.

I. HAVING thus consider'd the Rules and Examples that the *Scriptures* afford us in this point, let us in the second place compare the *Rules and Practices of Our Church* with this Pattern. I will not pretend that they come fully up to it, this being the most defective part of the *Reformation*; but I doubt not, on view, it will appear, that *Our Church* comes nearer the *Scripture* precedent, than perhaps any other.

'Twas the design of the *Reformation*, to throw out the corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, and to bring things back to what was practised in the *Apostles* time, and in the purer Ages of the Church. And as to the present point

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Point before us, Our *Reformers* found two corruptions crept in by time: The first was, That the *Priest* received the *Lord's-Supper* alone, without the people, which destroyed the Nature of this *Holy Sacrament*, as a *Communion*; The second was, That the People thought they had sufficiently observed the *Lord's-day* if they saw Mass, without understanding it, or receiving. Our *Church* therefore to *Reform* the first of these, Ordains, That there shall be no *Communion* except 4 (or 3 at the least) Communicate with the *Priest*. So where 3 are willing to Receive, the *Ministers* may proceed to the *Holy Communion* every *Lord's-day*. For our *Saviour* has promised, that *Where two or three are met together, he will be in the midst of them.*

Three therefore make a *Congregation*, and have a *Title* to the *Ordinances of Christ*; and there is no reason that the *Obstinacy* or *Negligence* of others should hinder such as are willing from *Worshipping God*, according to his *Institution*; and therefore our *Church* has taken care to provide for them, by *Ordering* that some part of the *Communion-Service* be read every *Lord's-day*; both with design to put all the People in mind of their *Duty*, and to accommodate such as can be prevail'd on herein to live up to the *Rules of Scripture*, and the practice of the *Primitive Church*.

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2. 'Tis Ordered, That in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches and Colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall all receive the Communion every Sunday at the least.

3. That every Parishioner shall Communicate at least threetimes in the Year, whereof Easter to be one; and surely such as cannot fit themselves so often, must, in their own Opinion, be out of the state of Grace, and deserve to be Excommunicated by the Church.

4. Lastly, As to our Practice we have prevailed so far, that Universally the Lord's Supper is Celebrated Thrice every Year; and where either our Perswasions, Arguments, or Entreaties can prevail with our People, we have Monthly Communion; and in Cities and large Towns, by the changing the Monthly Days in several Churches, People that are devoutly disposed, have Opportunities of Receiving Weekly: And we have reason to bless God that our Church wants not some, and I hope I may say many such.

5. Upon the whole, it must be confessed, That to hold Solemn Assemblies of Christians without Communicating, is a corruption of Popery, and came in by dissolution of Manners, and slackning of the Discipline of the Church; and tho' we have
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not been able to *Root-out* and *Reform* this *Popish Practice* intirely, yet we have done our *Endeavour*; and, by God's Blessing, may say, we have made some progress in it; insomuch that if we take that for *Ordinary* which has a constant fixed time for its *Observation*; the *Holy Sacrament* is an *Ordinary* part of our publick Service of God.

And I verily perswade my self, That by God's Assistance we should have brought our People before now to the Scripture-Order of constant Weekly Communicating, had not the Ill Example and Obstinacy of those that separate from our *Church*, encouraged them in their Negligence, and weakned our Discipline: For our *Church* orders *Non Communicants* to be presented and punished; and our Ministers do not generally flatter the People in their Sin, or dissemble their Duty in this point; but frequently and earnestly, by *Sermons*, *Admonitions*, and *Treatises* purposely published to this intent, press them to it; and therefore we are blameless before God and Man. Nor is it our Fault that the practice of our People is not Reformed, according to the Pattern of the *Apostolick Church*, and the Rules of our *Own*: So that we cannot be accused of laying aside the *Commandments of God*, or of teaching any *Doctrine of our own Invention* in this particular; tho' we are yet
too

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too far short of the *Primitive Practice* and *Institution.* *

S E C T. III.

The Practice of the Dissenters about Frequency of Communicating.

I. **I** Come now (according to my former Method) to *You*, my Friends, who *Dissent from us*, and intreat *You* to Examine, with *Me*, your Principles and Practice, by these Scripture Rules and Examples : And here first I must observe to you, That you have no fixt or set *Times* for the Administration of this Sacrament ; on the contrary, your *Directory* orders, *That the times how often this is to be Celebrated may be considered and determined by the Ministers and other Church-Governours of each Congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the Comfort and Edification of the People committed to their charge* : By which Rule, the *Lord's-Supper* is Excluded from being any ordinary constant part of *God's Service*, it being referred to the Discretion of the *Ministers* and *Elders* of each *Congregation* to determine, as in other occasional things, how often the People shall have the comfort of it. It had been as reasonable to referr it to their Discretion how often the People shou'd have the comfort of Hearing the Scriptures

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Scriptures read, of joyning in the Praises of God, or in Prayers to Him; which yet they determine *they are obliged to every Lord s-day.* Had they made the same Rule for the Holy Communion, they had, indeed, conformed to the Scripture-Precedent, and might have pretended to some Reformation: But to leave the Celebration of this Feast altogether Discretionary, I have shewed to be directly against what we find practised in Scripture.

II. Whereas it is a Corruption of *Popery*, to suffer the *People* to be present at the Publick Assemblies for Worship and Celebration of the *Lord's-Supper*, without being obliged to Receive; your Teachers, instead of endeavouring to Reform this *Abuse* and *Innovation*, have fallen into another Practise as unprecedented in *Scripture*, the Excluding this Sacrament intirely from your Ordinary *solemn Meetings*. And truly, in this Point, you seem more inexcusable than the *Papists* themselves; for the *Papists* order the Elements to be Consecrated every *Lord's-Day*, and distributed to those that desire it: But your Teachers neither Offer it to the *People*, nor invite them to it; nay, so far are they from it, that they do not so much as afford an Opportunity to those that desire to be constant Receivers: Which is plainly to multiply the Abuses introduced by *Popery*, instead of Reforming them.

III. They

III. They rarely press their *People* to *Communion*: They have few *Sermons* or *Discourses* to that purpose; and many of them condemn our Zeal, for endeavouring to restore the *constant Communion* preceded in Scripture.

I must further make *you* sensible, that *your* Practise is yet worse than *your* Principles. Your *Directory* owns, that the *Communion*, or *Supper of the Lord*, is frequently to be Celebrated, &c. But it fares with this, as with all other indefinite Rules; they signify only, that *People* may do what they please in the case. No body can certainly tell what frequently, many, often, or convenient, signify; and therefore, where only these Words are used in a Rule, it is little better, than to have no Rule at all, as appears in this very Case: for, when *People* were relaxed from the particular and certain Rules of our Church, by the first breaking off of those of *your Perswasion* from us, the *Lord's Supper* was laid aside wholly, for several Years, by some *Congregations*; and at last too many came to look on it as a Matter of no constant Necessity. I appeal to *You*, whether it is not yet reckoned a great thing among many of you, if once in a Year or two a *Communion* be celebrated in one of your Meetings: nay, among some of you, it is often omitted for several Years together

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ther ; and in some Places, for ten or more. I fear I may say, Your People generally have *too little Sense of the Obligation* of Receiving it at all; and your Ministers indulgethem *so far* in this Corruption, that a Man may live comfortably amongst you, and with the Reputation of a Professor, to Thirty or Forty Years of Age, and never Receive at all: And by the best Enquiry I cou'd make, I cou'd not compute that One in Ten that go to your Meetings ever Receive, *through the whole course of their Lives*, notwithstanding Christ's positive Command to do it in remembrance of Him. So unhappily are Men over-seen in laying aside the Commands of God, for their Own Inventions. I should be glad to find that I were mistaken in this Computation: In the mean time, you must give me leave to tell you plainly, That this Practise of Rare or No Communion, is *so peculiarly your own*, that I think you are altogether singular in it; and are so far from having any Precedent for it in Scripture, that I doubt whether any Precedent can be found for you, even amongst the most degenerated or Barbarous People that ever called themselves Christians.

And therefore, if you have either any true Regard for Scripture, or Reverence for the Constant and Universal Practice of the Church of God. You ought to reflect upon your
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Practice herein ; and consider how You can
answer it to God, or your Consciences.

I will not examine the *Reasons*, commonly given for your Omissions in this weighty Affair, since it is manifest no *Reason* of Man's *Invention* ought to be admitted for direct *Disobedience* to *Christ's Command*. If you are *Christians* in earnest, you ought, as often as you have *Opportunity*, to remember the great *Love* of our *Lord and Master*, as he has *Commanded* ; And your *Ministers* ought to take care to afford you frequently such *Opportunities*. If you or they neglect this, I do not see how you can with *Reason* insist so much on the *Purity* and *Observation* of *Christ's Institution*.

CONCLU.

CONCLUSION.

I Have gone through the *Five Principal* Parts of the *Publick Worship of God* ; and (I hope) in all of them have made good what I first undertook ; and shewed, that there needs no more to justify the *Publick Service* of our Church, than to compare it with the *Rules* and *Examples* of *Scripture*. I have only a few Words to add, by way of *Conclusion*, first to my Brethren of the *Clergy*, and then to the *Laitie* who are under my Charge.

To the Conforming CLERGY
of DERRY.

1. **A**ND First, as to you, *My Brethren*, that are of *Our Communion*, and own *My Authority*, let me, as a Brother, and a Fellow-Labourer, Exhort you to be Thankful to God, that has entrusted you with such an excellent Ministry and Service ; which being built on so sure a Foundation as the *Word of God*, can never be shaken, or put

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you

you to any great Difficulty to defend it, since you need no more than the plain Words of your Bibles, without *Gloss*, or *Commentators*, to assert and justify it.

2. Let me recommend to you Reverence, Devotion and Diligence, in the Use of this *Service*. I have already observed, That there is a Language of *Gestures* rather more significant and affecting than that of Words. It becomes us therefore, not only to Love and Use our *Service*, but likewise to recommend it to the *People*, by a distinct and affectionate manner of Pronouncing and Reading it, and by a devout and grave Behaviour at it. This can never be pressed too much on you, or on others by you; since 'tis absolutely necessary to give *Life* and *Efficacy* to it; as the contrary will expose the *best* and *most sacred* thing to *contempt*, and bring a greater Disparagement on our *Service*, than all Our *Adversaries* Endeavours can ever do. Though Our *Service* be Appointed by God, and Warranted by Scripture; yet even God's *Appointments* are *Abomination* to him, when separated from the *heart*, and are only acceptable to him, as they contribute to *Inward Devotion*. Let me therefore intreat you to labour so to perform the *Service* of Our Church, that it may attain the End for which God has design'd His *Worship*.

3. Since

3. Since the *Service of Our Church* is such as God has required in his *Word*, let nothing discourage us in the Use of it: Let us remember that we perform it in Obedience to God; And though some Hate, some Re-vile, and some Despise it, yet that the Author of it is able to Vindicate it. This is no New Thing, 'Tis the Entertainment the World hath generally given *God's Service*, and his *Truths*: And therefore neither Obstinacy, Perverseness, or Negligence of the People, whom you are to Perswade, ought to Discourage you. Be Diligent, be Constant, be Resolute, and be assured, that God will always give you Success, so far as is necessary to support his *Truth*. All Means are therefore to be attempted; and when one faileth, another is to be applied: And the more averſe People seem to the Way of *Worship* prescribed by God, and the more eager they are for any Corruption, the more Industry is to be used to bring them off from it; and when all other Means fail, earnest *Prayers* and *Intercessions* with God still remain: We are never to Despair, whilst we have God's *Truth* on our side, though whole *Provinces* should fall off from the Church; As all they in Asia did from Saint Paul, 2 Tim. 1. 15. Though few or none should believe our Report, as it happened to

Our *Saviour* Himself ; yet *God* will have a Reward for the Faithful Endeavours of his Ministers: And therefore we must not desist, though People seem Obstinate ; but *in season, and out of Season*, by Exhortation and Writing, by all Means of Importunity and Industry, we must press them to their Duty, and endeavour to bring them back to the Purity of *God's Worship*, as he has Instituted it.

4. Let me put you in mind , That the *Motives* you have to do your Duty , are the most Noble and Generous that can be : And you have this Advantage, that you cannot be supposed to be zealous in your Office, out of any private Interest, or prospect of particular Profit. Your Maintenance and Preferments are ascertained to you by Law, and do not depend on the Voluntary Contribution of the People. And as you are under no Temptation to please them, by complying with their Vices or Humours ; so neither can you be suspected to be Diligent and Industrious in your Office, out of any such mean Considerations. Since therefore what Pains you take, may well be supposed to proceed only from Sense of Duty, and the Love of God, let me intreat you to labour in it. It is certain , That neither Popularity, Faction, nor Worldly Interest, can

can influence you to this, so as they may some, that have no other way to attain to Honour, or Support, but by making or gaining a party. But God forbid that true Piety and Zeal for Souls, should work less effectually upon you, than those carnal and servile *Motives* do on others.

Let me therefore earnestly encourage and intreat you to do it more and more, and that you will endeavour to *become all things to all Men*; and decline none of those *Arts* which are allowable, when applied, to gain the People to *Truth* and *Holiness*; but very Wicked, when employed to divide and seduce them.

5. Let me put you in mind, That you are *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, and not of a *Party*: And therefore it concerns you to mind the common Interest of *Holiness* and *Religion*, more than those Differences that are often of little Concern in themselves, and are insisted on only as the Occasions and Badges of those People, who being resolved to separate themselves, are obliged to take up little Differences for a Distinction. The less you meddle with these Disputes, it is commonly the better: And indeed it is not prudent to mention them, till Mens Minds be fitted and prepared by a

true Sense of the great Duties of *Religion*: And then the best way, perhaps, will be, to shew of what little weight they are, to cause or justify Divisions or Quarrels amongst Christians.

I am well aware that it may be objected to us, That whilst we press the great Duties of the First and Second *Table*, and spend our Pains and Diligence in Defending our *Common Christianity* against *Papists*, *Socinians*, *Deists* and *Atheists*, those that are our *Adversaries* in these lesser Points, have made their Advantage of Our being employed against the *Common Enemy*, to undermine us with the People; nay, that some of them have been joined with those *Enemies* to pull down Our *Constitution*. But yet I perswade my self, that we are in less hazard from them, whilst we do our Duty, and apply ourselves to the great and common Obligations of Our *Holy Religion*, than if we should leave *this* exposed to the Assaults of Our *common Enemies*, to guard our selves from the Attempts of such *back Friends*. We must therefore have an Eye to them; but the other, the Great and Common *Truths* and *Duties* of the *Gospel*, must be our main Business.

I might

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I might add many more *Remarks* proper to my present Subject, but I know your own *Prudence* and *Observation* are sufficient to suggest them to you; I shall only add my *Prayers* for you, that God will encrease your *Wisdom* and *Zeal*, and effectually turn them to his own *Glory*.

To the Dissenting Ministers of Derry.

BUt as to *You, My Brethren*, That disown my *Communion* and *Authority*, I have reason to fear that what I shall offer to you, may receive some prejudices from my *Station* and *Character*, with which you seem offended: Yet *reason is reason* from whomsoever it proceeds; and I only desire that you would weigh seriously what I have here offered, in defence of the *Service of Our Church*; and if the *Arguments* do not convince *You*, yet let me *pray You* to reflect thus far on the matter, as to remember, that all *Mens* minds are not of the same make; and that it becomes *You*, and all *good Men*, at least to treat *Our Service* with respect; since we believe, and think we have proved, That it is clearly, founded

founded on the *Word of God*. It will not excuse scurrilous or unseemly Reflections on it, to say that we are mistaken: For all *Men* are fallible, and you may as well be mistaken as you suppose *We* are; And therefore lest *You* should be in the wrong, it will be the safest way to be *modest in censuring*.

No Man ought to take it ill that another proposes *Reasons* against his *Opinion*; but to scoff at, or revile any *practice*, or *opinion* that another believes to be founded on the *Word of God*, is not only Ill Manners, but is of dangerous Consequence; being apt to breed *Bitterness*, and *Animosities* between the Parties: And if it should happen in a Case where the *Practice*, or *Opinion* is really *Warranted* by the *Word of God*, it would be a *Blasphemy* and *Impiety*. And therefore in all Matters of *Religion* we ought to avoid this manner of Treatment; and whatever *Book* uses it, we need trouble our selves no farther with it, for it certainly is written only to serve a Party, and not *Truth*.

There is another thing that in *Justice* I think I may request of *You*, which is, That in *Your Worship* and *Practice*, *You* will not make the Difference between us seem greater than really it is. To abstain from a thing confessed to be lawful in the *Service of God*, meerly

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ly because observed by us, is surely very far from a *Spirit of Meekness and Moderation*: And therefore I may hope that *you* will not *Indulge Your People* in such affected distances, that can serve to no other purpose, but to make Parties irreconcilable; and must proceed from a greater *bitterness of Spirit* than a *good Man* can be guilty of towards any Christian.

And that *You* may understand my Mind the better in this Matter, I will give *You* a few Instances that I hope will be inoffensive; and in which we may justly expect *Your Compliance*.

1. The first is in the use of the *Lord's Prayer* which is owned in *Your* larger Catechism, to be *Not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make other Prayers, but may be also used as a Prayer*. And in your *Directory* 'tis recommended to be used in the *Prayers of the Church*. Yet I am informed that *You, my Brethren*, of this Diocese, who separate from *Our Communion*, do universally neglect it, and thereby confirm *Your Hearers* in an Opinion, too common amongst them, that all *Forms of Prayer* are unlawful. And that for no other Reason, that I can learn, but to keep up a Difference from us in Practice, where we really agree in Point of Doctrine.

2. Your

2. Your *sitting at Publick Prayers*, may be a second Instance, in which we may reasonably expect some *Reformation*. 'Tis a very irreverent thing in it self, against the *Command* and *Examples of Scriptures*, as I think I have sufficiently shewed, and against the *Opinion* of Your best *Casuits*, particularly of Dr. Ames, *de Conscientia*, Lib. 4. Cap 18. *Sessio per se non est gestus Orandi, quia nullam exprimit reverentiam neque in Scripturis approbatur*. That is, *Sitting is not of it self a posture of Prayer, because it expresses no Reverence, neither is it approved in Scripture*. Yet I understand that this is the general Posture in which your *People* offer their Publick Prayers; and either because it is for their Ease, or because you are unwilling to seem to lay any stress on outward Performances; or lastly, lest you shou'd be like us, you indulge them in it; and some of them are so ignorant, that they reckon it a piece of Superstition in us to kneel at our Prayers; and are averse to our Service, amongst other Reasons, because this is required at it. Which Notions, I suppose, you your selves do not approve; and therefore we may justly expect that you shou'd endeavour to inform your *People* better, and bring them to a Compliance with the Rules of Decency in their *Religious Performances*.

3. My

3. My Third Instance shall be in the Matter of the *Holy Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper*. I suppose no serious considering Persons amongst you can deny but the celebrating it so seldom as it is done in *your Meetings*, and the *Peoples* backwardness in Receiving it, are very great Faults; and therefore we may reasonably expect that you should press home to *your People* the Danger of their Neglect, and represent to them truly the sin of it, so as not to suffer any to assume the Name of a *Professor*, or a *Religious Person*, that doth not in some measure come up to the Scriptures Precedent in this particular; and withal, so ordered the celebration thereof, that every one may have sufficient Opportunities to Receive, as the first Christians did; which in your present way of managing, is impossible: From whence you may be sure, *yours* is not the *Scripture-way*, and therefore needs *Reformation*.

4. Let me put you in mind, That it is ordered by *your Directory* (as I have already observed) that *ordinarily one Chapter of each Testament be read at every Meeting; and sometimes more*. I think you cannot dispense with this Rule, without being liable to Just Censure, from all that have a true value for the *Word of God*; And yet I am informed that
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there is not one of *your Meetings* in this *Dio-*
ces, where it is observed, to the great Detri-
 ment of our *common Christianity*, and offence
 of *your Brethren*. I know the People are
 fonder of Sermons and Lectures of Humane
 Composure, than of the pure *Word of God*
 in its Naked Simplicity; but you know this
 to be a carnal and sinful Humour in them;
 and God forbid any that claims to be a Mi-
 nister of the Gospel shou'd indulge them in
 it: and therefore as *you* wou'd maintain a
 due Reverence in the *People* for the *Word of*
God, I think we may expect your Confor-
 mity to us in this particular.

5. I suppose *you* very well know that the
 most learned and sober *Non-conformists* do own
 that *Occasional Communion* with our Church
 is lawful, and that *People* had better come to
 our *Worship* (at least where he that *Officiates*
 is of *Ability* and *Sobriety*) than sit at home on
 the *Lord's-Day*, or frequent no *Assemblies* at
 all; And *you* cannot be ignorant that many
 Thousands in these Parts neglect all *Publick*
Worship, and many suffer their Children to
 die Unbaptized, for want of Ministers of
 their *own Communion*; And therefore in this
 Case, it is a Point of Justice due to the *Souls*
 of these *Poor People*, and to our common
Christianity, to let them know that it is their
 Duty to joyn with us both in *Worship* and Sa-
 craments,

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eraments, as far as your Brethren in England
have Allowed it on such Occasions.

6. You are sensible that amongst those Protestants that dissent from our Church, some are *Congregational*, and others *Presbyterians*; You of this *Diocese* where I am concerned, profess to be of this latter Sort, and agree with us in owning, that by Christ's Appointment, the particular Churches in convenient Districts, ought according to Scripture-Precedents, to Associate under one Government; and these again to Unite themselves into greater Combinations of *Provincial* and *National* Churches. The Difference between *You* and *Us* is concerning these particular Districts; Namely, Whether the Government of them ought to be in a *Presbytery*, with a *Bishop* as President and Governor, by Christ's Appointment; or in a *College of Presbyters absolutely Equal*. So then, we both own *National* and *Provincial Churches*, as well as single *Worshipping Congregations*; but the *Congregational Dissenters* deny that Christ instituted any other Church, besides a single Congregation; and affirm, that all other Churches, such as *Classical*, *Provincical*, or *National*, are *Humane Inventions*; and that every single Congregation is *Independent*, and may indeed keep a fair Correspondence with its Neighbour-Congregations, but is not under any common

mon Government with them. Thefe laft are the avowed Principles of Mr. Baxter, Dr. Owen, Mr. Lobb, Mr. Humphrys, Mr. Boyfe, Mr. Alfop, Mr. Clerkfon, and generally of all the late Defenders of the *Difsenters* Caufe in *England* and *Ireland*, that I have met with. Now it is manifefit that thefe Principles of theirs, are much more different from your Principles, than ours are; And the difference is much greater, and more material. For it is poffible on your Principles and ours to preferve Unity, and to keep up fome value for Excommunication, and other Cenfures of the Church; fince he who is cenfured in one Church cannot be received into another, neither with you nor us: Whereas in the *Congregational way*, he that is Excommunicated in one *Congregation*, may remove to another, or fet up one for himfelf if he pleafes; at the worft, if he fhould, it would be counted *but an Irregularity*. Thefe Principles are deftructive to the Peace and Unity of the Church, as well as to our *common Caufe*; And our Learned Men have carefully Answered all the principal Writers of that fort; fo that no Books of that kind have remained Unanswered, but fuch only as were meer Repetitions of what had been faid and answered before. I do not remember any of you have of late undertaken the Defence of this important Truth; tho' the *Assembly* of

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of Divines in their Humble Advice ——— concerning Church-Government (which I suppose you approve) do prove it from the Holy Scriptures in their Title of Classical Assemblies. Now we think, in Justice to your Own Cause, as well as to Us, you ought to warn your People against those Books that maintain Principles contrary to us both; at least not to bear them in hand, that those Books written against Us, make for You; for this will appear a great piece of Insincerity, as well as Ingratitude; and will tempt the World to believe that you are willing to encourage Principles destructive to your own Cause, (as the Principles of those Books manifestly are in this very Point) so they do but serve a Turn and strengthen your Party amongst the ignorant People.

6. Lastly, I think we may justly expect from you a ready Concurrence with us to beat down such Vices and Immoralities as are confessed on all hands to be against our common Christianity; such as *Adultery, Fornication, Blasphemy, Profanation of the Lord's Day, &c.* And since the *Bishops Courts* are Legally impowered to punish these, and many are guilty of them who yet will not appear or submit to acknowledge their Sins, and upon that Account are Excommunicated: the least that can be expected from you in these

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Cases, is, Not to encourage such Sinners in their Obstinacy, or to admit them to Communion amongst You, whilst they lie under such Censures ; which might be a means to Reform, in some measure, these Crying Vices.

These are but few of those things that might be instanc'd; in which we may concur in our *Practice* as well as we do in our *Opinions* ; and if we did, I perswade my self, that tho' they did not bring us to one *Religious Communion*, yet they might much contribute to our living easily with one another, and take off that Uncharitableness which our *Religious Dissentions* are apt to cause amongst us: However, it wou'd be a great Satisfaction to Me, and I should reckon it some kind of Success in my Office, If I cou'd prevail with any sort of *People*, that profess to meet in the Name of *Christ*, to come nearer to his *Institutions* in their *Worship* ; tho' I should not be able to perswade them to the *Communion* whereof I am a Member.

*To the Conforming LAITY of the Diocess
of DERRY.*

AS to You, my *Friends* and *Brethren* of the *Laitie*, who profess your selves Members of the *Established Church*, It hath pleased God to place Me *amongst you*, and to give me an Inspection *over you*; and 'tis chiefly on *your Account*, that I have written and published this Treatise, that it may be a Pledge and Testimony to you of my concern for you, and make my care to reach as far as may be amongst you. I hope my Labours this way may be Useful to you, to settle the Minds of the Doubtful, and to awaken you all to Diligence and Zeal in the performance of the Service of God.

The great Principles of *your Religion*; as *you* are Members of the *Established Church*, are Uncontroverted on all hands; and I have here endeavoured to shew that your *particular Way of Worship* is warranted by the Holy Scriptures. You have reason to bless God, that He has afforded you so many Conveniencies of frequenting it; in which

He has been pleased to give you so manifest Advantage above your *Dissenting Neighbours*, that notwithstanding their Numberness, you have Five Places for Worship, for One that they have. This will render you inexcusable, if you neglect Attendance at them, or spend any *Lord's-Day* (as is too common in this Country) in a meer Rest from *Labour*, without any *Publick Worship*.

I must likewise put *you* in mind that our *Service* is not only fitted for the Publick, but is likewise proper for private Families; and therefore I would advise *you* to make use of the Words with which Our Church has furnished you, in *your Houses*, as well as in the Church. At least to use such select *Hymns* and *Collects* as seems most adapted to that purpose. And at more solemn times I conceive our *Litany* is as full and proper a Service as any Master of a Family can desire to offer to God.

I must therefore most earnestly and passionately exhort *you*, by the Name of Our Lord *Jesus Christ*, for his Church's sake, and *your own*, that *you* will add *Diligence* and *Zeal* to this *your* reasonable Service, and prepare *your Hearts* to seek the Lord *your God* in his *Holy Worship*. And particularly that
you

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you wou'd endeavour to convince the World, that it is not *Faction*, or a *Party* you contend for, but the *Fruits of Righteousness*; and there-upon strive rather to *out-live* those that differ from *You*, than to *out-argue* them. Let the innocency of *your* Lives, and *your* Christian Moderation convince them of the unreasonableness of their separation.

I beseech the *God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ* to multiply his *Grace and Peace* upon *You*; and to influence *You* by his *Holy Spirit*, that *You* may be perfect in every good *Work*; and particularly in that of *Worshipping* him in *Purity and Holiness*.

*To the Dissenting LAITY of the Diocese
of DERRY.*

AS to *You, My Friends*, that dissent from Our *Communion*, it remains only, that I beseech *You* in the *Spirit of Meekness*, (as one that is appointed by the Providence of *God*, and the Care of a Christian Magistracy, to watch over *Your Souls*) That *You* will seriously consider, and lay to heart what I have here tender'd to *You*. I cannot prevail with you to come and receive *Instruction* from my Mouth, and therefore I have taken this way to inform *You*. I will only add a few *Observations*, which I recommend to *You*, and shall leave the Success intirely to *God*.

1. Therefore *You* may observe, that in this Treatise I have not led *You* into long *Reasonings* or the Intricacies of *Humane Learning* ; but I have referred *You* to your *Bibles*, and *You* need go no further than to them to be satisfied whether the things I have said be as I have represented them or not. Those of *Berea* are reckoned a *Noble People* (Acts 17. 11.) because they searched the *Scriptures*, and I pray most heartily to *God* to give *You* a part in that Nobleness
of

of mind, that You may search and find the Truth.

2. I wou'd desire You to observe that it ever has been, and in all probability ever will be the humour of the *World*, to be more fond of *Their Own Invention* than of what God Commands. If we look thro' the whole Scriptures we shall find, that the *Prophets* sent by God, the Doctrines revealed by him, and the *Worship* he Commanded, have had but ill Entertainment amongst the People. There never appeared half so much Zeal or Inclination in the generality of Men, for the True God and his *Worship*, as for the false *God's*, and their *Prophets*. And there is an obvious natural reason for it, since what Man invents must needs have a nearer agreement to the Carnal and Corrupt Inclinations of our depraved Nature, than what God prescribes: which is the very Reason that induces Men to change the *Institutions* of God, and substitute their own *Inventions* instead of them. A thing that would never come into any Man's Mind, if he did not find more ease or gratification to his Humour in them, than in observing God's Commandments.

If it were proper to referr you to the History of the Church, you would find that most of all the Corruptions in the *Worship* of God.

God, were introduced by the Fondness and violent Inclinations of the People for them; and that the Church-Governours did long oppose them, and were brought with difficulty at last to comply with them. Thus the Worship of Images, Prayers for the Dead, Purgatory, the Intercession of Saints, Half-Communion, being present at Church-Assemblies without Receiving the *Lord's-Supper*, and Worshipping the Host, were all vulgar Practices at first, against the Opinion of the Governours of the Church, who generally Opposed and Condemned them; but being Humane Inventions, the People were so violent for them, that there was no withstanding them; so that if the Governours they had would not comply, The People did set up those that would.

Now let me intreat you to reflect a little, and consider with all seriousness, whether there may not be something like this in your own Case, especially in the Matter of Extemporary Prayers. It is plain, you have brought them into Practice, against the Opinion and Constitution of the Church-Governours, and of the First Reformers, who all did settle *Liturgies* in the Churches which they Reformed: This *Knox* did in *Scotland*, whose *Liturgy* we have ready to produce,

to

to the Conviction of those who pretend to be his *Successors*, and yet condemn *Forms of Prayer* as Unlawful. This *Luther* did for *Germany*, and *Calvin* for *Geneva*, and for the *French Church* whose *Liturgies* are still used by them. Yet I find this weighs not much with you, though you seem to me to have little to oppose to it, besides a strange *Fondness* and *Passion* you have entertained for the contrary. And let me tell you, That it is no hard matter to give a Reason why the generality of the *People* are better pleased with such *Extemporary Prayers*, than with *Forms*: For can any one wonder that a Prayer which *People* never heard before, and is adapted to the *Fancies* and *Humours* of a *Party*, with all the *Advantages* which *Novelty* gives, should gratifie carnal and itching Ears, more than the fix'd and settl'd Prayers of a Church, or that *Form* dictated by Christ Himself? To joyn in these with *Devotion*, requires us duly to prepare our Hearts, to strain and lift up our Minds with much Seriousness and Attention, or we cannot be affected by them; whereas there is a Pleasure, and a kind of Sensual Delight, in the Novelty of the other *Prayers*; and the Tone with which they are sometimes delivered, makes the *Hearers* imaginarily Devout, though they come to them without taking Pains to strain their Minds to true *Devotion*. But you ought

bought to remember that *Images* and *Reliques*, and *Mediatory Saints*, had the very same Effect on People long ago; which made them so fond of them, that they brought them into their *Worship*, in spite of the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, as you have now brought in *Extemporary Prayers*: But 'tis rare to find the generality of Men fond of what is truly Spiritual: And therefore Peoples Fondness of your peculiar Way of *Worship*, is so far from being an Argument for it, as I find some of you use it, that, on the contrary, it is a shrewd Presumption that it is not from *God*; especially since ill People are fond of it, as well as good: as is manifest from many undeniable Instances; which could not be so, if it were truly, and of it self Spiritual.

3. I would desire *you* to consider, that nothing can generally induce *Our Clergy* to decline these *Extemporary Prayers*, but their *Conscience* and *Conviction* that they are not convenient in the Publick Service of *God*, 'Tis manifest, that *Extemporary Prayers*, would be much more easie to most of us, and less burthensom than the Service we use: *You* may think otherwise, but assure your selves that you are mistaken; and I dare appeal to those that have tried *both*, whether is most easie: There are such both amongst

amongst *You* and *Us* who have made the Experiment; and I dare referr it to them to declare, on their *Consciences*, which of the two Services they look on to be the greater burthen to him that performs them. Whatever *You* may think, if we would Indulge our selves, it were no hard matter for the meanest of *Us*, to pass an *Extemporary Prayer* on our *Auditory*, or to turn the Heads of our Sermons into one.

Lastly, I have one thing which I would more-especially request of *You*, that you would believe that I sincerely and heartily desire and study the good of *your Souls*; and that I have in this Treatise endeavoured to promote it, and by *God's Assistance* ever shall in all my Undertakings.

And if *You* had the same Apprehensions with *Me*, *You* would not wonder at my Concern in this Matter; for how is it possible that any Man that has a Zeal for the Purity of *God's Worship*, should not have his *Spirit* moved within him, to see a well-meaning People so strangely mis-led, as to content themselves to meet together, perhaps, for some Years, with a design to *Worship God*, and yet hardly ever see or hear any thing of *God's immediate Appointment in their Meetings*. Now to my thoughts this is manifestly the case of many of *You*; since

since a Man may frequent some *Meetings* amongst *You* for some Years, and never hear a *Prayer*, a *Psalm*, or *Chapter*, which has been immediately dictated by God, and never be called on to bow his Knee to God, or see either *Minister* or *People* address themselves to him in that humble Posture. Lastly, Never see any Body offer to Administer, or desire to Receive the *Food of Life* in the *Lord's-Supper*. These are Melancholy Reflections to me, who believe that God has required these in his *Worship*: and therefore I hope *You* will take it in good part, that I endeavour to restore them to *You*.

I have only to add my most earnest Prayers to God for *You*; And to beseech him who is the God of Mercy, and Purchaser of his Church, by a Price Inestimable, to vouchsafe his Blessing to these my Endeavours, for *your Souls Instruction*; That *You* may reap the Benefit, and I the Comfort of them, in the great Day of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who only is the True Teacher of Souls by his Spirit, and is able to Seal the *Instructions* of his Ministers to *Your Hearts*, to open the Eyes of *Your Understandings*, and to guide *You* into all *Truth*.

F. I. N. I. S.